

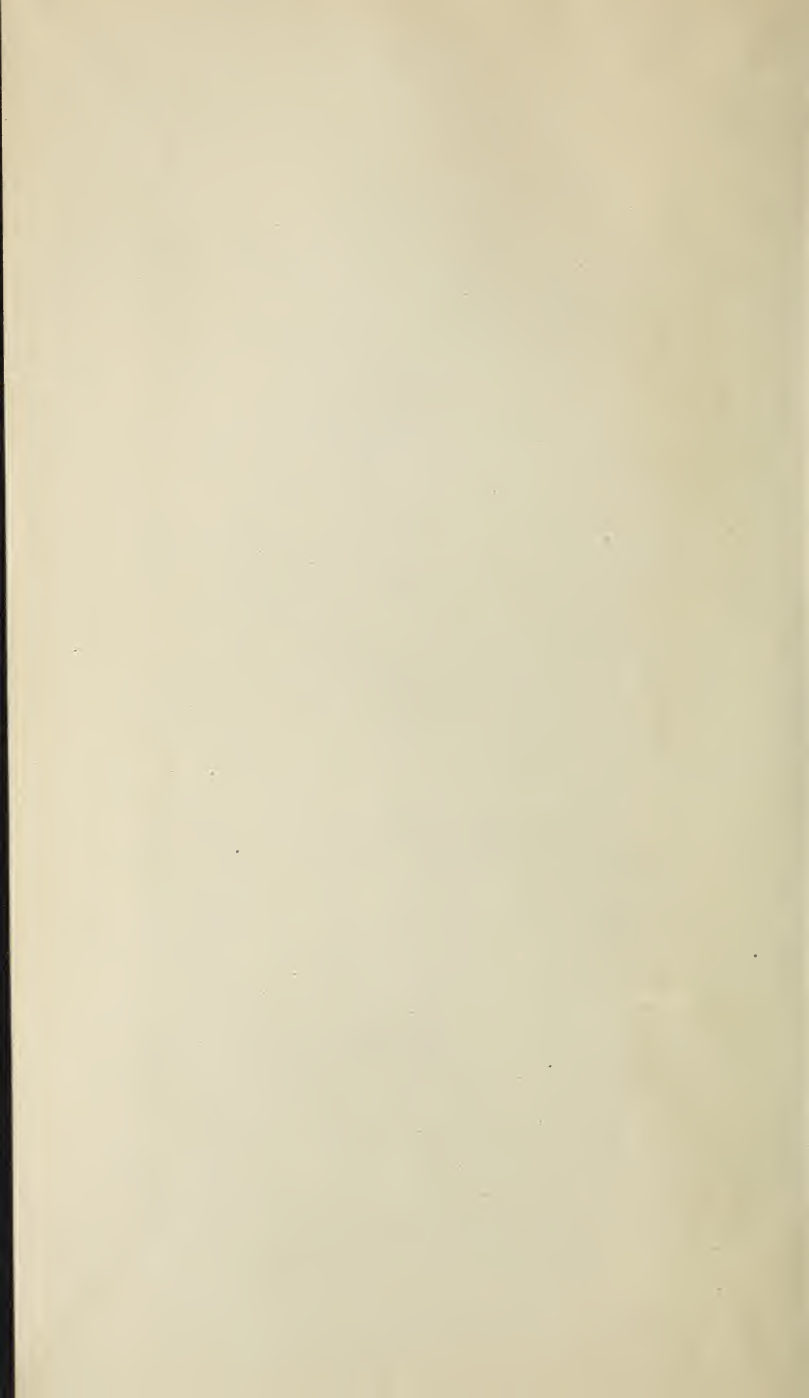




Class BL 310

Book .L 27











# Mythology

RELATED TO CHILDREN.



# Mythology

RELATED TO CHILDREN.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH

OF

M. LAMÉ FLEURY,

AUTHOR OF SEVERAL ELEMENTARY WORKS.

WITH

QUESTIONS FOR EXAMINATION,

BY THE TRANSLATOR.

CHARLESTON:

JOHN RUSSELL, 256 KING STREET.

---

1853.

BL 310  
.L 27

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1853,

BY JOHN RUSSELL,

In the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the United States for the District of  
South Carolina.

68395-  
105-

Ms. 12-32.  
m. 5. 9.  
Ms. 12-32.

## CONTENTS.

	Page
TO CHILDREN, - - - - -	13

### The Divinities of India.

THE METAMORPHOSES OF VISHNU, - - - - -	22
--	----

### Mythology of the Persians.

THE MYSTERIES OF MITHRAS, - - - - -	28
-------------------------------------	----

### Mythology of the Egyptians.

ISIS AND OSIRIS, - - - - -	33
THE DEFEAT OF TYPHON, - - - - -	38

### Mythology of the Greeks and Latins.

SATURN AND JANUS, - - - - -	44
JUPITER, - - - - -	50
JUNO AND MERCURY, - - - - -	55
THE EMPIRE OF NEPTUNE, - - - - -	61
THE BIRTH OF MINERVA, - - - - -	66
THE CAPTURE OF PROSERPINE, - - - - -	69
DIANA, - - - - -	74
APOLLO AND DAPHNE, - - - - -	78
THE FALL OF PHAETON, - - - - -	84
THE MUSES, - - - - -	89
BACCHUS AND SILENUS, - - - - -	95

	Page
THE JUDGMENT OF PARIS, - - - - -	- 102
THE LABORS OF HERCULES, - - - - -	- 108
HERCULES IN HELL, - - - - -	- 114
TARTARUS AND THE ELYSIAN FIELDS, - - - - -	- 120
THE TUNIC OF THE CENTAUR NESSUS, - - - - -	- 126
THE LABYRINTH OF CRETE, - - - - -	- 131
THE ARGONAUTS, - - - - -	- 135
THE SORCERESS MEDEA, - - - - -	- 139
A MYTHOLOGICAL WALK, - - - - -	- 144

### Mythology of the Scandinavians.

THE GODS OF THE NORTH, - - - - -	- 150
THE PALACE OF ODIN, - - - - -	- 154
ODIN'S HORSE, - - - - -	- 160
THE GOD LOKE AND HIS CHILDREN, - - - - -	- 163
THE TRAVELS OF THOR, - - - - -	- 167
THE GIANTS' TOWN, - - - - -	- 173
THE DEATH OF BALDER, - - - - -	- 179
THE HELL OF THE SCANDINAVIANS, - - - - -	- 184
THE TWILIGHT OF THE GODS, - - - - -	- 189



## PREFACE BY THE TRANSLATOR.

---

A FAMILIAR acquaintance with the Heathen Mythology, while it tends to cultivate the fancy, and is necessary for a proper understanding as well of poetry as the fine arts, is so liable to objection in some points of view, that those properly impressed with the deep responsibilities of the parent or teacher, may well inquire as to the expediency of giving it a prominent place among early studies. It is so plainly a duty of vital importance in education, to screen the holy innocence of childhood from whatever may in any degree dim its lustre; to guard the chambers of imagery in the youthful breast from the intrusion of any unsightly object; to fix the young attention, as far as may be possible, only on such things as are "pure, lovely, and of good report," that the conscientious teacher is often in a strait how to choose, and whether in reaching for-

ward to the tree of knowledge, the young aspirant may not gather quite as much evil as good.

While we deprecate the narrow and futile notion of cloistering the growing intellect of the young female, by shutting it in behind a close grating of ignorance; while we admit that the eyes and ears cannot always be kept fixed upon objects carefully prepared for them, by the vigilance of anxious affection; still, it is surely a prime duty in education, so to guard the entrance of those ever open portals in the early days of life's spring, that in the future, when influences and associations which we cannot control, begin to exert their power, there shall at least be no beckoning guest within to invite and welcome the intruder. Lamé Fleury's course of Mythology and History has been prepared with a care sufficient to satisfy these requisitions; and his skill in the art of imparting instruction and fixing the attention of childhood, renders him a true benefactor to all engaged in the cares of education. His style is so beautifully simple, so "naïve" (to borrow a term from his own expressive language), that the most untrained intellect comprehends him without difficulty: he seems to be chatting with his young readers as if one of themselves; while in the familiar strain in which a companion might relate the

most trifling family anecdotes, he imparts a varied and accurate knowledge of his subject which few need disdain to make their own.

In compiling and arranging the little volume now referred to, this author displays his peculiar powers as a proper teacher of childhood in an especial manner: from *his* recitals the youthful fancy receives no taint; with the caution of a tender parent, he has so culled and prepared the food thus offered to the youthful appetite, that all the usual objections to an acquaintance with this entertaining branch of literature are obviated. The ingenuity with which he has separated the tares from the wheat is truly admirable; he seems to have left nothing out, his detail seems entire, yet not one uncomely circumstance finds a place in it. Nor is he less successful in his benevolent effort to mingle entertainment with instruction. While, like a gay comrade, he seems opening a budget of fairy lore for the amusement of his young auditors, he gives a clear, succinct, and graphic delineation of the fabulous personages and events of which he treats; taking in a much wider range than has hitherto been thought necessary in works of this kind. The mysteriously significant divinities of Persia and Egypt, the joyous, fanciful, always gracefully poetic denizens of the Greek and

Roman Olympus, the grotesquely fierce heroes of the Scandinavian Valhalla, all stand forth in equally bold relief in Lamé Fleury's complete Pantheon.

The translator has been led to assume the place of interpreter to this admirable author, whose language is now so generally esteemed a necessary branch of a polite education, by the following consideration, namely,—that this ingenious little work, although so comprehensive in its detail, is at the same time carefully adapted to the tastes of an age, when, according to the usual routine of study, the French language is not read with fluency, but when the lively images therein portrayed are calculated to prove peculiarly attractive.

# Mythology

## RELATED TO CHILDREN.

---

### TO CHILDREN.

IF you have chanced, upon occasion, my little friends, to walk out just before sunset, in a beautiful field, there to breathe the pure and balmy air of a summer evening, you have, doubtless, been charmed with the spectacle presented by Nature, then so gorgeous and animated. There you gaze on meadows enamelled with flowers, covered with fine trees loaded with their ripening fruit, or shady groves where the heat of the sun cannot penetrate; sometimes you stop to admire the transparent waves of some large river, or to listen to the murmur of some lovely brook flowing into it, while this gay scene is further embellished by the flocks of fat sheep coming to slake their thirst in these limpid waters, and by the melody of thousands of little birds who, concealed among the foliage, warble in full chorus.

Have you not felt, at this hour, how charmingly the air is cooled by the light breath of the evening breeze? Have you not remarked on one side the sun, which, although



half concealed under the blazing horizon, still obliges us to cast down our eyes; while on the other the moon rises like a broad sheet of silver, reflecting the last rays of the setting sun? Has not all this appeared to you as it has to me—a magical and a marvellous sight, from which you could not withdraw your eyes without regret?

Well, my children, this magnificent picture offered by our country is far surpassed in those countries of the East; that is to say, in the countries situated in that part of the world where the sun rises. There the whole atmosphere appears enveloped in a veil of light: the waves of the sea when in motion seem to sparkle; the eye is attracted by the richness of the vegetation; a soft and refreshing exhalation wraps the foliage of the trees, the fruits gathered there seem more exquisite, the harvests are more abundant; while near at hand, as if to enhance by contrast the gifts with which Providence has loaded this happy corner of the earth, appear fetid marshes, or vast deserts dried up by the sun, without trees, without verdure, where no drop of rain ever falls to refresh the soil, and over which violent winds rush from time to time, sweeping up mountains of sand.

It was, therefore, in the East, my little friends, that the varied aspect of Nature first attracted the attention of the inhabitants, who did not have the happiness of knowing and loving the true God as we do. These men, though so rough and untaught, soon came to the conclusion that the phenomena which appeared to them so wisely regulated were neither self-created nor preserved by chance; but, as they were very ignorant, they imagined that all those things which excited their admiration were the work of many different gods.

Thus they persuaded themselves that the earth from

which they obtained their food was a benevolent goddess, the common mother of all mankind ; that the sea was only restrained within its limits by a god who governed it as he pleased ; that the rivers which watered their meadows were so many benevolent divinities ; and that the sun, especially, that great luminary which gives us light and ripens our harvests, was the Supreme God ; while the moon with her silver disk must be either his wife or sister. In short, there was no extravagance which they did not imagine, and which they did not consider reasonable.

When once they had conceived this idea, they did not stop there. The woods, the fields, the depths of the sea, the stars which glitter in the sky, and which form what are called constellations, were peopled by divinities multiplied interminably. Each tree had its goddess, destined to live and die with it ; each brook was consecrated by a Naiad or water-nymph. There was a goddess who presided over flowers, another over fruits ; a god for sheep and cattle ; in short, there was soon not a single gift of Providence which was not placed under the protection of some divinity, to whom they hastened to attribute a form, and to consecrate altars.

Now it was gratitude alone, which first led to the setting up of gods ; but afterwards fear and suffering induced men to imagine others. They raised temples to death, to pestilence, to war, to tempests, to all the scourges which desolate humanity and ravage the world. They adored malicious gods as they had at first adored the benevolent ; vice was personified by the institution of an especial worship, as virtue had been. The arts, the inventions of human genius, had also their tutelary divinities ; afterwards, men themselves, who had rendered services

to their fellow creatures, and even, in some countries, certain animals, hurtful as well as useful, received divine honors; soon each particular nation imagined particular gods whom they worshipped after their own fashion, so that in a few centuries the earth was filled with an endless number of divinities of all sorts, to whom sacrifices were offered and temples built.

It must be confessed, my little friends, that these gods, immortal as their worshippers supposed them to be, did not display any great perfection; they were, like us human beings, subject to anger, to grief, to weakness, to sickness, to falsehood, to all the defects and all the miseries of our frail nature: the most ridiculous stories of all sorts were told of them—stories that will make you shrug your shoulders, though you are still but children.

It is the history of these different gods, of the worship that was rendered them, and of the forms under which they were represented, that we call MYTHOLOGY, and which I am now about to relate to you, in order that you may hereafter better comprehend some of the narrations which you will find in other books. This history will not be a true one, I warn you, and the term *fable* is with justice applied to it; but it is not the less indispensable that well taught children should be acquainted with it, and I beg you will listen with attention, because it is not less instructive than amusing.

#### QUESTIONS FOR EXAMINATION.

- Where is it supposed that the idea first arose of a variety of gods?
- Was it gratitude or fear that first led to this idea?
- Mention the several objects of idolatrous worship?
- What was the character attributed to the gods?
- What name is applied to the history of these gods?



## THE DIVINITIES OF INDIA.

If you were told, my young friends, of a country where the sand washed up by the rivers is mixed with grains of gold; where the mountains produce precious stones, and inexhaustible mines of silver; where animals of the rarest and most beautiful species are found; where even the skins of the inhabitants are of different colors, varying from the brightest red copper to the most polished bronze; you would doubtless imagine, and not apparently without reason, that you were listening to a tale more incredible than that of Little Thumb, or the Cunning Princess.

Well, this wonderful country, this country of such extraordinary productions, does really exist in Asia; it is called India, and the inhabitants are called Hindoos.

Many years ago—oh! but so many years ago, that nobody has ever been able to count them—this beautiful country did not exist, and the whole universe was nothing but an immense extent of water, wrapped in darkness.

Now, lo and behold! all at once a young and beautiful creature—generally called in India, Bhavani—appeared upon the surface of the waters. At first, she was alarmed at finding herself thus buffeted about by the waves, in profound darkness; but, by degrees, becoming accustomed to this new sort of existence, she began to rejoice and to skip gaily about, almost like a little child to whom some one has just given a pretty toy, or rather like a little fish which leaps to the surface of a pond during the hot evenings of summer. But while, in her joy of heart, she

was committing a thousand extravagances, she dropped three eggs; and these eggs breaking, there came forth out of them three young gods, whose names were Brahma, Vishnu, and Siva, which names signify the Creator, the Preserver, and the Destroyer.

Now, you must know that these three personages are the great divinities of India, where they are sometimes worshipped under the form of a single person with three heads, called the Trimurti. (See Plate I. fig. 1.)

I shall have more than one fable to relate to you regarding them, beginning with Brahma, who was the creator of all things except the sea; for there was before him an unknown and all-powerful god, who had created the water without any one's help.

Brahma, then, who became, the very moment after his birth, a reasonable being, found himself seated in the midst of the waters on a Lotus flower, a plant which frequently grows in rivers where the climate is warm; and it must be allowed that he would have been an alarming sight at that moment, if there had been anybody to look at him, for he had four heads on a single body, and as many arms.

Around the god reigned profound darkness, which the eyes of his four heads could not pierce; and he had not yet recovered his astonishment at his mysterious birth, when all at once a voice sounded in his ear, commanding him to pray to his Creator. Thereupon, Brahma prostrating himself, saw displayed before him all the wonders of creation, which seemed, however, in a state of torpor; and after having remained contemplating this prodigious spectacle during a hundred years, he set about creating the Universe, that is to say, the sky, the earth, the stars, the

plants, the trees, the rocks, and, finally, the animals. The globe was placed by him on the summit of a high mountain, called by the Hindoos, Mount Merou.

Meanwhile, my children, the earth was still uninhabited ; the sun rose and set every day, but there was no one to admire its radiance ; and the crops which grew naturally were not gathered in, when Brahma determined to draw out of his head a man, to whom he gave the name of Brahman, which signifies priest. He then gave to this man four books, called the Vedas, or the word of his four mouths, which he commanded him to study until the end of the world. Then, as the priest, being afraid of the ferocious beasts with which the forests were filled, could not devote himself quietly to this reading, the god drew out of his right arm a warrior, to defend the priest.

But while these two men were occupied, one in studying the Vedas, the other in destroying the wild beasts, there was nobody to cultivate the earth and provide them with food. They complained, therefore, to Brahma, who drew out of his thigh a third man, to act both as laborer and merchant. Finally, as these three men could not by themselves accomplish all the work that was to be done, the god consented to draw out of his foot a mechanic, to work for his brothers.

This should teach you, my children, that men are necessary to each other, and that it is their duty mutually to serve and love one another. Consequently, the selfish are universally detested, and certainly it is very natural to dislike those who are unwilling to oblige others.

Brahma next provided each of these personages with a wife, and these four families became the source of as many *castes*, that is to say, races of men who still subsist in

India; namely, those of the priests, the warriors, the laborers, and the mechanics. But what distinguishes these different castes still more than the trades which they exercise, and which they are never allowed to give up, is the difference in color among them. The priests and the warriors have almost as white a skin as the inhabitants of Europe; the laborers and merchants are of the color of polished copper; while the mechanics and artisans are almost as dark as the bronze ink-stands which you have sometimes seen on writing-desks. There is in India, besides these, a fifth caste, despised by all the others, which are called Parias. The men and women of this race are so detested by all the Hindoos, that they are forced to live apart in isolated habitations, and every one has a horror of touching them. These unfortunate Parias are also distinguished by the color of their skin, which is a dingy black.

After this, Brahma became so proud of having invented the Vedas and created the world, that he thought himself superior to his brothers Vishnu and Siva; but as pride, you know, is a great defect, he did not long escape punishment, and was precipitated from the height of heaven to the very bottom of the abyss over which the world was suspended. He was obliged to appear in the world under four different forms, either of animals or wicked men, before he could return to heaven; and the Hindoos still believe, at the present day, that he did not resume his place beside his brothers until he had endured this punishment.

As I have already said that the whole of mythology is nothing but a string of fables, I need not now repeat to you that this history of Brahma, as well as all those



which follow, are absolute fictions ; but these fictions are very instructive, because they are for the most part ingenious allegories, under which the most enlightened men of ancient times tried to conceal the secrets of nature and of the omnipotence of God from the ignorant.

## QUESTIONS FOR EXAMINATION.

Who was Bhavani?

From what did the three great divinities of India spring?

What did their names signify?

Under what figure are they sometimes worshipped?

Describe Brahma's appearance directly after his birth.

What was he commanded to do? and how did he proceed in the creation?

On what mountain was the globe first suspended?

How did Brahma create the first man? what was his name, and what his business?

For what purpose and in what way did Brahma create the second man?

What led him to create the third man? and in what way did he accomplish it?

How did he create the fourth man, and in what rank was he placed?

What lesson should we derive from all this?

What did Brahma then do for the four men whom he had created?

What particular institution did these four families become the source of?

Describe the four different castes, their color and occupation?

Was there any other caste?

What were its character and condition?

What was Brahma's conduct after these several exploits?

What punishment did he incur by his presumption?

What truth is there in all this?

## THE METAMORPHOSES OF VISHNU.

Although the god Vishnu was not considered among the Hindoos as less powerful than Brahma, he was not employed like his brother in the creation ; it was his business to watch over the preservation of this wonderful work, and all the treasures contained in it. Whenever any catastrophe has threatened the globe or its inhabitants, say the worshippers of this god, he has shown himself on the earth under a different form. This is what we mean by the Metamorphoses of Vishnu, and the account given of them is sufficiently singular for me to call your attention to them.

The first time that Vishnu descended from Heaven, was in order to recover the sacred books of the Vedas, which had been carried off by a giant, an enemy of the gods. After having long searched for them in every corner of the earth, the god at last discovered that the thief had hidden them in the bottom of the sea ; whereupon, immediately taking the form of a fish, he plunged into the waves, found the giant, and snatched from him the precious books which Brahma had formerly confided to his priests.

One day, the gods having prepared a mysterious beverage which was to confer immortality on all whom they should permit to taste of it, some wicked genii presented themselves in order to claim their share. Thereupon arose a violent quarrel between the gods and these genii, who engaged in such a furious combat, that Mount Merou which supports the earth was precipitated into the sea, and the whole globe was about to perish, when

Vishnu, taking the form of an immense tortoise, supported the world on his back, until the earth had resumed its place. But he could not prevent a portion of the divine beverage being spilt over the surface of the water, which changed it into a sea of milk, whence there came out several wonderful things, such as a white elephant with three trunks, and a superb horse with three heads.

Meanwhile, my little friends, although the wicked genii, who generally showed themselves under the form of monstrous giants, had been vanquished by the gods, they did not give up the plan of destroying Brahma's work ; and one of them having rolled up the earth like a sheet of paper, carried it off upon his shoulders to the bottom of the abyss. But Vishnu having been informed of this, changed himself into a wild boar—some say only into a hog,—and, attacking the giant, brought back the earth upon his snout, and restored it to its place. Vishnu appeared again several times under the form of different animals, and each time he saved the world from some great peril ; but at length he grew tired of concealing himself under these mean disguises, and determined not to appear again except under the human form.

At that time, there was a king called Baly, whose kingdom was so extensive that it was said to comprise heaven, earth, and hell ; which rendered him so proud that the indignant Vishnu resolved to punish him. With this purpose, the god having taken the form of a Brahmin, so little, so very little that he might pass for a dwarf, presented himself before the king, and after amusing him with some quaint tricks, begged as a reward to receive three paces of the soil of his vast empire. Baly began to laugh on hearing this request, for the three steps that the

Brahmin could have taken with his little legs would not have equalled one half of the step taken by an ordinary man, so he immediately granted him what he desired. But the god suddenly displaying a body of a prodigious size, with one step measured heaven, with another the earth, and with the other he was about to encompass hell, when Baly, throwing himself at his feet, besought Vishnu to leave him at least one corner of his kingdom. Vishnu, satisfied with having humbled the pride of this powerful monarch, pardoned him, bidding him content himself for the future with the infernal regions, of which he left him the control.

However, Vishnu had hitherto only appeared under the figure of a simple priest or an ordinary mortal; but he also wished to be acknowledged on the earth as a great king, that so he might instruct mankind and teach them the use of agricultural implements. He therefore showed himself successively under the names of Rama and Crishna, two of the most valiant princes who have ever lived in India, and his history then becomes so singular, that I must continue to relate it to you.

While the god, under the figure of Rama, was reigning over a part of this country, he had married a princess called Sita, who was more beautiful than the day; but a giant, whose name was Lanka, having one day perceived her walking alone on the shore, carried her off, and, crossing the sea, took her away into his own country, whither Rama resolved to follow him.

However, this valiant prince, not having an army sufficiently numerous to undertake so distant a journey, determined to enter into an alliance with the king of the apes, who immediately sent him from the mountains, where he



lived, a considerable troop of his subjects, headed by the great ape Hanouman, who was of the most beautiful species, and, moreover, a very skilful warrior.

Hanouman had also several little talents ; besides playing tricks and cutting capers like his fellows, he was, it is said, an excellent musician. An army of bears came also to offer their services to Rama, who, having joyfully accepted them, set out immediately, accompanied by his new-fashioned champions.

Now, in order to reach the country to which Lanka had carried the queen Sita, it was necessary to cross a considerable arm of the sea, and having no vessels in which to embark his army, Rama was beginning to despair, when the General Hanouman, at the head of his long-tailed soldiers, set about constructing a great bridge of rocks, which should reach from one shore to the other, and finished it in a very few days, because the apes—who are, as you know, very quick in their movements—proved excellent workmen. Rama, taking advantage of this unexpected aid, immediately crossed the sea on this famous bridge, and having reached the perfidious Lanka, he killed him in battle, and recovered his dear Sita, with whom he is sometimes represented as seated on a throne, surrounded by apes. We recognise among the courtiers around him the famous Hanouman, to whom the Hindoos attributed the invention of their music. (See Plate I. fig. 2.)

The adventures of Vishnu, under the name of Crishna, were not less marvellous. Born of a royal family, he preferred passing his life among shepherds and shepherdesses, who danced to his flute, the sounds of which were so melodious that they brought the wildest animals to his

feet. This pastime, however, was not the only one that suited his taste, for from time to time he was seen to carry off mountains on his finger, to kill monsters of all sorts, and to dance on serpents' heads.

When he had reached the age of manhood, Crishna began a journey over the world, in order to destroy the many-headed giants and other tyrants who were desolating it; at the same time, he instructed the people, and taught them to seek wisdom in order to attain happiness.

At length, when Vishnu thought there was nothing more for him to do on earth, he returned to Heaven, from whence he has descended only once under the form of a virtuous and learned man called Buddha, in order to instruct the people of India in the religious ceremonies of the Brahmins, or priests of Brahma, to whom he consecrated the Lotus, that marvellous plant on which that god had been seated before the creation.

The Hindoos were persuaded that Vishnu will not appear again until the end of the world; that then he will borrow the form of a winged horse of dazzling whiteness, having one foot raised above the globe; and that when he places this foot on the world, the wicked will be precipitated into the infernal regions, and the earth will crumble into dust. While awaiting this fatal moment, Vishnu is supposed to be sleeping peaceably in the sea of milk, where he reposes on an adder with five heads, which on the last day will vomit torrents of flame, and destroy every creature.

I shall have nothing to tell you of the god Siva, the third personage of the Trimurti, except that it was he who, under the semblance of monsters, giants, and wicked kings, was the constant enemy of the good Vishnu.

I do not know if these extravagant tales have interested you at all, but I would urge you to listen attentively to them, because it is from India that almost all the mythological fables have been derived, as I shall have occasion to show you in the course of this book.

#### QUESTIONS FOR EXAMINATION.

What was the especial office of the god Vishnu?

What name is given to his exploits?

What was his first exploit?

How did he rescue the earth from destruction?

How did the wicked genii next endeavor to destroy the earth? and how did Vishnu save it?

Under what forms did Vishnu appear again? and for what purpose?

Who was Baly? and what was Vishnu's adventure with him?

Under what names did Vishnu afterwards appear on the earth?

How did the giant Lanka provoke him?

Who aided him in rescuing his wife?

How did Vishnu pass his childhood under the name of Crishna?

In what way did Vishnu benefit mankind after reaching manhood?

Under what name did Vishnu last descend to earth? and for what purpose?

What part did the Hindoos believe that Vishnu was to perform at the end of the world? and in what position did they suppose he was awaiting it?

What is said of the god Siva?

## MYTHOLOGY OF THE PERSIANS.

## THE MYSTERIES OF MITHRAS.

As in relating to you the history of the great Cyrus, my children, I have told you a great deal about the Persians, who overthrew the empire of the Medes ; I must now endeavor to give you some idea of the gods worshipped by these people, whose wisdom and sobriety we have together admired ; for you will doubtless recollect that the people of that nation lived upon bread and cresses, which did not, however, prevent them from becoming strong and courageous men.

Now you will doubtless be very much surprised when you learn that the ancient inhabitants of Persia knew no other divinities, than fire, water, earth, and air, besides the sun and moon, which they held in especial honor : but they raised neither temples nor altars to them. It was on the summit of the mountains, that some luckless animals were sacrificed to them.

Now, my little friends, you will readily understand that to a people who worshipped the sun and fire, nothing was so alarming as night and darkness : therefore when they observed that the light disappeared every evening, they imagined that some malevolent divinity obliged it to conceal itself ; and as this wicked god must be designated by some name, they gave him that of Ahriman. The gloomy Ahriman was held by them as the enemy of the benevolent god, who had conferred upon them the blessing



of daylight, and to whom they gave the name of Ormuzd.

Ormuzd and Ahriman were, therefore, the principal divinities of the Persians. To the first they attributed every blessing—life, health, the fertility of the earth, the creation of every useful thing, above all of light; and to the second, all evil, disease, the sterility of the earth, the creation of everything hurtful, particularly of darkness, which was their abhorrence. The dwelling of Ormuzd was supposed to be fixed in Heaven on a high mountain, only to be reached by crossing a marvellous bridge, which was guarded by a faithful dog.

Ahriman, on the contrary, must live in a frightful abyss where the light of day could not penetrate. Both were attended by good and bad genii, whose business it was to execute their commands on the earth. If you have attended carefully, my children, to what I have just told you, you will easily understand the parts assigned by the Persians to these two gods, who differed so much from each other. Thus they called Ormuzd the king of the white genii, and Ahriman the king of the black genii; and they imagined that they must be engaged in perpetual warfare with each other, because, in fact, good is always as much opposed to evil, as day is to night. Therefore, those pretty flowers, whose perfume you inhale with so much pleasure in the garden, the little white dog who loves and caresses you, the bird that sings so gaily in bright weather; all these things, if you had been bred among the Persians, would have been considered by you the gifts of the benevolent Ormuzd. While, on the other hand, those sharp nettles which scratched your face while you were walking though your neighbor's garden, the ugly adder who tried

to sting your pet dog, the melancholy owl who hides in the old oak to avoid the daylight : would have appeared to you to have been created by the dark Ahriman. On holidays, you would have supposed that Ormuzd brought good weather, and Ahriman rain. —

But, my little friends, there was a third, who held a middle place between these two divinities who differed so much from each other ; he it was who prevented Ahriman from triumphing over Ormuzd ; in the same manner as, among the Hindoos, Vishnu interposed between the Creator Brahma, and Siva the destroyer. This was Mithras, or the sun—that beneficent planet, which allows neither light nor darkness to prevail, but always makes the day succeed the night. He was worshipped under the semblance of fire ; and instead of those magnificent temples which I have elsewhere described to you, it was in the most gloomy caverns that a mysterious worship was rendered to him.

The priests of Mithras were those Magi, so often spoken of in ancient history, and the first of them was called Zoroaster : to him was attributed the invention of fire worship, as a way of paying divine honors to the sun upon the earth.

Now, my good friends, I must tell you that the Magi did not admit all the Persians indiscriminately to join in the worship of Mithras, in those gloomy caverns where they had established it. Those who desired a free entrance into these sacred grottoes were obliged to submit to ordeals so severe that the most courageous were often disheartened by them. It was not until after the most painful probation that they were taught the mysteries of this worship, which were called the Mysteries of Mithras. These trials were indeed wisely established to keep away

the curious and indiscreet, for they were thrown alternately into water and fire; they were made to fast in a desert for fifty days, and then buried in snow for twenty days more. Finally, when curiosity had enabled them courageously to support these cruel tortures, a Magian led them into the most secret recess of the cavern, where, at the extremity of an illuminated grotto, was seen a beautiful young man, who they were informed was the god Mithras.

The Magi at the same time taught their initiated (this was the name given to those who had been admitted to the mysteries) that a day would come, when Ormuzd and Ahriman would engage in a final combat; after which the world, being renewed by fire, would become a new earth, which the brilliant Mithras would light up with his rays.

The mysterious worship of this Persian divinity was carried to Rome, and practised there during several centuries. In the early times they sacrificed human victims, but the emperor Adrian forbade these horrible sacrifices, which were not renewed until the time of the most cruel of the emperors, such as Commodus and Heliogabalus.

The Persians had no temples, like the Greeks and Romans, neither did they set up statues to their gods; there is no image of Ormuzd and Ahriman known of; and when Mithras is represented on their monuments, it is always under the form of a beautiful young man, his head covered with an Asiatic cap, seated on a bull, which he is in the act of immolating at the entrance of a cavern. (See Plate II. fig. 4.)

This picture, in which also appear two Magi, one holding a lighted torch, and the other an inverted one, to represent day and night, is doubtless that of some sacrifice usual in celebrating the mysteries of Mithras; or rather,

according to several learned men, it depicts some great astronomical discovery regarding the course of the sun.

This sketch of the Persian Mythology, my children, has not perhaps interested you as much as I could have wished it would, but it was important for you to learn something about it, because we will find in our progress some fables connected with it, which you will be very well pleased to dwell upon awhile.

#### QUESTIONS FOR EXAMINATION.

What was the especial object of adoration to the Persians?

What were the names of the two principal Persian divinities?

What were their especial offices, and where did they each live?

Who were their companions?

Was there any other divinity besides Ormuzd and Ahriman?

What was his name, and what is its meaning?

Under what image was Mithras worshipped, and in what places?

What name was given to the priests of Mithras? and who was the first?

Were all the Persians permitted to join in the worship of Mithras?

Mention the several trials to which the candidates were subjected.

With what ceremonies were they introduced to the worship of the god Mithras?

What did the Magi teach regarding Mithras' destiny at the end of the world?

Into what country was the mysterious worship of this divinity carried?

By what emperor was the sacrifice of human victims arrested?

Under whose reigns were these sacrifices renewed?

Were there any images of Ormuzd and Ahriman? and how is Mithras represented?

What is the picture in which he is represented supposed to signify?



## MYTHOLOGY OF THE EGYPTIANS.

## ISIS AND OSIRIS.

IF, among the histories already related to you, my little friends, you have remarked, as I hope you have, that of the ancient Egyptians, you will doubtless not be sorry to recur in this place to that extraordinary country which is watered yearly by the Nile, and where so many celebrated monuments are still to be found at the present day.

Well, as Egypt is also situated in the East, as well as India and Persia, which we have just been speaking of, it is the history of the Egyptian gods that I am going to relate to you; these gods also will seem very extraordinary to you, with their grotesque appearance and their marvellous adventures, but I have warned you that I should relate things to you which would seem more incredible than any fairy tale, and I must keep my word.

There was formerly in Egypt a king called Osiris, and a queen called Isis, who managed their household extremely well. Some say they were brother and sister; and that, according to the custom of the country, they had been married; but others assert that the king only had a brother called Typhon, who had red hair and a very bad character, and that the queen, Isis, was a beautiful princess from a neighboring country, whom Osiris had married.

Now this good prince, having invented the plough and the art of cultivating the earth, which we call agriculture, resolved to impart to the neighboring countries the advan-

tages of his discovery. Like the Crishna of the Hindoos, he sought to render the people happier by making them better; and, to this end, he gathered together a great army of men and women, with whom he set out to traverse the world, not for the purpose of ravaging his neighbors' lands, as conquerors generally do, but to teach them to till their fields, and draw abundant crops from them. Therefore, as Osiris had none but good intentions, he succeeded entirely in everything he undertook, and made friends wherever he went, because men could not be too grateful to him for the useful inventions which he brought them.

While this good king was travelling in this manner through distant countries, he had left his kingdom to be governed by his wife Isis, whose wisdom he was well acquainted with, and by his brother Typhon, who would gladly have taken possession of the throne of Egypt during his absence; this jealous prince having for his share only a marshy country which constantly exhaled the most pestilential vapors, besides those barren deserts, where, as you have already learnt, the army of Cambyses was buried under mountains of sand.

But Osiris, on returning from his travels, was welcomed by his people with such acclamations, that Typhon could not do otherwise than restore his crown to him.

However, this wicked prince, who had not relinquished the desire of making himself king of Egypt, resolved to draw his brother into a snare, and thus to bring about his destruction. To this end, he invited Osiris, shortly after his return, to a great feast, under pretence of celebrating this happy event; and after the repast, which was a splendid one, he had brought before the guests a magnificent chest of such exquisite workmanship, that all who were

present coveted it. Osiris was as much charmed as any one, and could not help letting his brother see how gratified he would be by the possession of this marvellous chest ; but the perfidious creature, who had his reasons, replied that he had made a vow only to give it to one who could get his whole body into it.

Osiris immediately offered to try to accomplish this, which the other agreed to eagerly ; but scarcely had the good prince placed himself in this dangerous chest, when the traitor Typhon, closing it with force, ordered it to be taken up and thrown into the Nile, which was instantly done.

I leave you to imagine the grief of the queen, Isis, when she learnt the perfidy of Typhon, and the death of her husband. In the extremity of her grief, she covered herself with mourning garments, and abandoning her palace and kingdom to her son Horus, she set forth to try and recover the chest which contained the body of the unfortunate Osiris, and pay it the last honors ; while Typhon took advantage of her absence to possess himself of the throne and drive his nephew from it.

Now the waters of the Nile, in flowing on towards the sea, had carried the body of Osiris to a place in the neighborhood of the town of Byblos in Egypt, where the chest had stopped under a lotus plant, which, in a very few years, grew so prodigiously large that it entirely enclosed Osiris' coffin. The king of Byblos having observed this wonderful plant, thought it so beautiful that he had it cut down to form one of the columns of his palace.

During this time, my little friends, Isis, inconsolable as ever, had travelled through many countries, without hearing any news of the object of her search ; the greater part

of those she met on her way did not understand her when she spoke to them, and the others turned their backs without answering, for few people trouble themselves much with consoling the afflicted. At last she met some children, who were more compassionate, and who informed her that the object of her inquiries had been carried by the river towards the town of Byblos. The good Isis thanked them heartily, and in order to reward them for their courtesy, she bestowed on them the gift of divination; that is, the power of discovering all that they wished to know, after which she eagerly continued her journey.

In this way, she reached the gates of Byblos, one of the largest cities of that day, where, oppressed by sadness, she seated herself on the brink of a fountain, hoping that some charitable person passing by might give her some information regarding the object of her search; but it was a long time before any one appeared, and she was just beginning to despair, when the servants of the Queen of Byblos came to draw water from the fountain, and began to question among themselves as to what that stranger, who seemed so afflicted, was doing there. Isis, who heard what they were saying to each other, approached them, and touching their long hair with her hand, she spread over their whole persons the odor of an exquisite perfume, which surprised them exceedingly.

Now, these women having gone to tell their mistress of the marvellous gift which they had received from the stranger, this princess was so charmed, that she besought Isis to become the nurse of her son, who was still very young. The goddess, without declaring who she was, readily consented to do so, because she was persuaded that in that country she would find her husband's body.



Isis had been nursing the little prince of Byblos for some time, by putting her finger into his mouth, for she had no milk to give him; and she had even become so much attached to this child, that in the hope of rendering him immortal like herself, she surrounded him every night with celestial flames, when at length she discovered in the palace, the column in which was inclosed the box containing Osiris's body. Immediately transforming herself into a swallow, she began to flutter around the column; but the queen having surprised her while thus occupied, uttered such a piercing cry on seeing her child enveloped in flames, that Isis, resuming her original form, acknowledged who she was. The queen, touched at the recital of her misfortunes, granted her permission to take possession of the long-sought coffer, which she immediately did, without injuring the column which supported the palace, which column was afterwards held sacred by the Egyptians.

Isis then embarked on the river with her precious burden, and returned to a town called Buto, where the young Horus was kept in concealment, lest his uncle Typhon might discover and destroy him. It was near Buto that she erected a small tomb, where she placed the body of her lamented husband.

From that time, the shrub lotus, which had preserved the body of Osiris, was revered by the Egyptians, who regarded it as imaging the fertility with which the Nile covers their country, because the appearance of this aquatic flower yearly announces the period of the overflowing of the river.

#### QUESTIONS FOR EXAMINATION.

Who were the two principal divinities of Egypt?

What were the name and appearance of Osiris's brother?

How did Osiris spend his time?  
In whose charge did Osiris leave his kingdom?  
What portion of the country of Egypt did Typhon possess  
How did Typhon conduct himself towards his brother?  
What was the result of Typhon's plot against his brother?  
How did Isis act after Typhon's treachery?  
What became of the chest containing Osiris's body?  
What adventures did Isis meet with on her way?  
How did she gain admittance into the town of Byblos?  
What was Isis's employment in the palace of Byblos?  
How did she act on the discovery of her husband's body?  
How had young Horus been disposed of during this time?  
What did Isis do with her husband's body after recovering it?  
Why is the lotus worshipped by the Egyptians?

---

#### THE DEFEAT OF TYPHON.

During all this while, my little friends, the traitor Typhon had remained in peaceable possession of his brother's throne, and Osiris had gone down to the infernal regions, whither the Egyptians believed that the souls of all men went after death, and he had even become king of these gloomy abodes under the name of Serapis.

One day, while Typhon was engaged in a bear hunt, which sport he generally pursued by moonlight, he chanced to approach the place where stood Osiris's tomb, and soon discovered that it held his brother's body. In his fury he cut it into fourteen pieces, which he threw about in every direction, and even into the Nile, in order that Isis might not be able to find them, and still less put them together again. But this princess having heard of the new crime perpetrated by this wicked wretch, immediately set about

seeking for the remains of her husband's body, and with such diligence that she succeeded in finding them all but one, which one of the fish in the river had devoured.

Meanwhile, the time was approaching when Osiris was to return from the infernal regions, and drive the cruel Typhon from the throne which he had usurped. In effect, the good king, having re-appeared on the earth, joined his son Horus, who, at the head of an army, succeeded in conquering the usurper, and even in loading him with irons; but the good Isis, seeing her enemy thus overpowered, was touched with pity for him, and broke his chains, so that Typhon, making his escape, took refuge in the desert, whence he has never returned.

The prince Horus was so angry that his enemy should thus have escaped him, that, forgetting the respect which he owed his mother, he tore off the diadem with which her forehead was crowned; but the queen consoled herself for this, by putting some cow's horns upon her head, with which she is often represented.

All those personages whose history I have just related to you, received divine honors after their death, and temples and numerous edifices were built for them in different parts of Egypt. The largest of the pyramids, which is still to be seen near the ruins of Memphis, was supposed to have been the tomb of Osiris; and the representations of these divinities are found on all the monuments which time has spared. Osiris and Isis were considered by the Egyptians as the great gods, the gods of virtue and abundance, and Typhon as the god of evil and sterility. A son of Osiris, called Anubis, who had, it was said, aided Isis in seeking for her husband's body, was associated with them; and he is often found represented beside them, having the

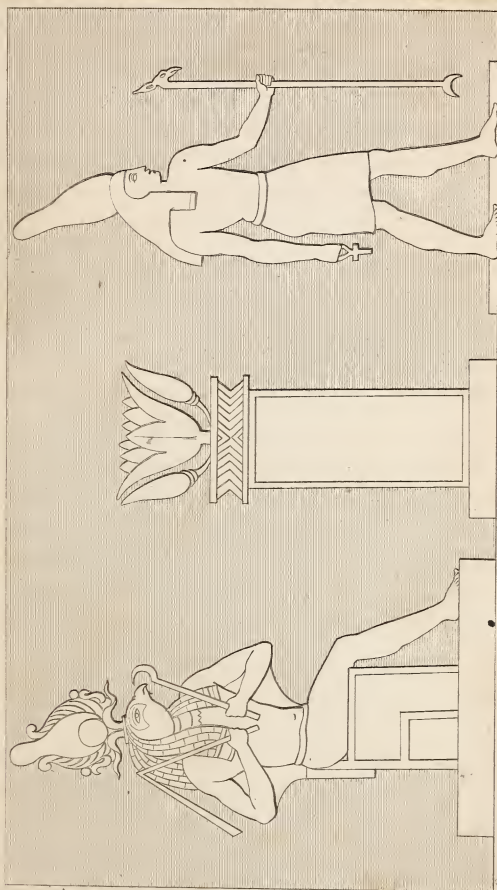
head of a dog, to signify the sagacity which he displayed on that occasion.

Horus and Anubis were not the only children of these two celebrated gods. Harpocrates was considered as their son; and in his character of the god of silence, he is always represented as standing in a fixed posture, and with one finger on his mouth. The Egyptians and other nations of antiquity placed him at the doors of their temples, thus signifying that the mysteries with which Divinity is surrounded ought always to be respected.

Now, I must tell you under what grotesque forms the ancients worshipped these gods whom they so highly honored.

Osiris is generally represented as a robust personage, sometimes with a man's head, sometimes with the head of a hawk, a sort of bird of prey, whose piercing eye can gaze upon the sun; sometimes also with the head of an Ibis, another bird much honored in Egypt, because it destroyed the little serpents with which the earth was left covered after the inundations of the Nile. (See Pl. III. fig. 4.) The image of this god is often seen crowned with a lotus flower, which is easily recognised by its five leaves. He holds in his hand a stick surmounted by a tufted bird's head, and on his shoulder a flail for threshing grain, in allusion to the art of agriculture, the invention of which was attributed to him; and the ox Apis, whom the ancient Egyptians adored as a divinity, was only the symbol of husbandry, which this wise nation justly honored as the most useful to mankind of all the arts. Often also Osiris wears on his head a pointed cap, sometimes a globe or an elephant's trunk. It is by these different ornaments that he is frequently characterized; but he is chiefly distin-





*Isis, Osiris.*

*Fig. 4.*

OSIRIS.

*Fig. 5.*

*Osiris, Isis.*





MYTHOLOGIE DES ÉGYPTIENS.

Pl. II.



*Boudet Ed.*



*M. Le Roy scul.*

MS 125.

Fig. 7.

guished by a sort of key which he holds in his hand, to signify his entire control over the inundations of the Nile, whose beneficent waters are the sole cause of the fertility of Egypt. (See Pl. III. fig. 5.)

When Osiris was invoked under the name of Serapis, the god of the infernal regions, it was under the figure of a venerable old man, whose forehead was surmounted by a bushel, such as is used for measuring grain; he was seated on a throne, and at his feet lay a dog with three heads.

The goddess Isis is often represented with the features of a beautiful woman, whose head, bearing two vulture's wings spread, is crowned with a long pair of horns, between which is placed a globe, or round disk; she holds in her left hand a stick, tipped with a tufted bird's head, and in her right the key of the Nile. (See Pl. IV. fig. 6.)

Sometimes also Isis is represented seated, and holding a child on her lap; on her forehead an aquatic serpent erects its head; this serpent is called *Uræus*, and is considered by the Egyptians as the symbol of royalty. At other times, instead of having the face of a female, this goddess appears with a cow's head and horns. (See Pl. IV. fig. 7.)

Osiris and Isis were often considered as representing the sun and moon, and then the horns which we see on the images of this latter divinity only represent those of the crescent of this planet. As to the perfidious Typhon, as if ugliness always indicated wickedness, he is almost constantly represented under the form of an ugly red-headed man, or of a monster with several bearded heads. Strangers were also represented by such figures on the monuments of the Egyptians, who hated their neighbors, and considered them as enemies.

Typhon was also worshipped under the form of a croco-



dile, of a hippopotamus, of a wolf, or some other destructive animal. The people of Egypt attributed to him all the miseries of their country, such as plague, drought, and famine, its usual consequence; and to propitiate him, a hare, the most timid of animals, or a red ass, because of the obstinacy and indocility of this creature, was sacrificed to him.

Osiris, Isis, Horus, Anubis, Harpocrates, Typhon, were not the only divinities worshipped by the Egyptians; they also worshipped the Cabiri, a kind of inferior gods, but also powerful, to whom they had raised a magnificent temple in the city of Memphis. These gods, who were seven in number, were represented by very corpulent dwarfs with monstrous heads and armed with hammers, and were considered the guardians of Egypt. Now if any of you were to ask me to explain these fables, I should say that Osiris represented the Nile, the benefactor of Egypt, of which country his wife Isis was the type; and that Typhon, that malevolent god, the true Ahriman of the Egyptians, represented the African wind, a devouring blast which withers the harvests of that country, and destroys the hopes of the husbandman.

#### QUESTIONS FOR EXAMINATION.

What had become of Typhon and Osiris during Isis's wanderings?  
Under what name was Osiris worshipped in hell?

How did Typhon discover his brother's body? and how did he treat it?

How did Isis recover it?

What was Osiris's course on returning from hell?

What feelings did Isis display towards Typhon?

How did Horus act towards his mother?



What did Isis substitute for her lost diadem?

What observances were shown all these personages after their death?

What was supposed to have been Osiris's tomb?

In what different ways were the three gods, Isis, Osiris, and Typhon, considered by the Egyptians?

What is said of Anubis?

What other son had these two great divinities?

\* How is he represented? and where was he placed?

How is Osiris generally represented?

What animal was worshipped by the Egyptians? and what was it a symbol of?

With what head-dress is Osiris sometimes represented? and by what badge is he especially to be distinguished?

Under what figure was Osiris worshipped when invoked as the god of hell?

How is the goddess Isis often represented?

What were Osiris and Isis often supposed to typify?

How was Typhon represented?

What feelings did the Egyptians entertain towards strangers?

Under what other forms was Typhon represented?

What animals were sacrificed to him?

What other divinities were worshipped by the Egyptians?

† What was the number of the Cabiri? and how were they represented?

How may these fables be explained?

## MYTHOLOGY OF THE GREEKS AND LATINS.

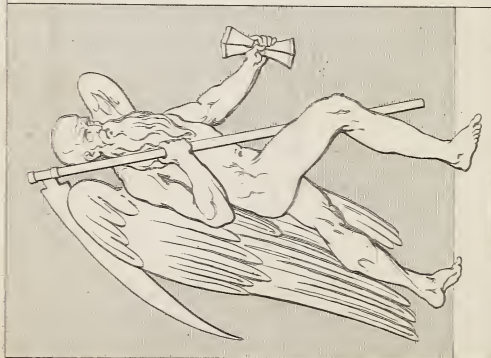
## SATURN AND JANUS.

SUCH of you, my little friends, as have read the Grecian History, will doubtless remember Cecrops and Cadmus, who carried the arts of Egypt and Phœnicia into the country of the Pelasgians; but the cultivation of the fields, that of the vine and the olive-tree, were not the only gifts conferred on Greece by these courageous adventurers, for they also introduced into it the gods of their country.

Isis, Osiris, Typhon, Anubis, the Cabiri, did not indeed preserve their names in these foreign countries, and still less their grotesque figures; but the stories told about them became the source of a much more diversified mythology, and as interesting, though of quite a different character from that which I have just related to you. It was from Greece that the worship of these gods spread rapidly over Italy, where the Romans, and before them the people of Latium, successively raised a great number of temples and altars to them.

This Greek and Latin mythology, my young friends, ought to be studied with care, because all the pictures which ornament the palaces and public gardens refer to the divinities described by it. Were you to take a walk in the Tuileries or Luxembourg, you would there see a great number of the images of these gods and goddesses, which you will easily learn to distinguish when you have heard the different fables regarding them, and remarked





*Bonnet Del.*



*St. Key del.*

*Fig. 8.*

*Fig. 9.*

SATURNUS.

CYBELLE.

the attributes which characterize them ; but as, perhaps, you do not yet know what is called an attribute, I will endeavor to explain it to you.

Each divinity, in order that it might be recognised, was provided with some particular badge ; thus we have already seen that Isis and Osiris held the key of the Nile, a flail, or a stick, which served them as a sceptre. Other gods are armed with a thunderbolt, a lance, a sword, a buckler : some goddesses wear crowns of flowers and green branches, or they hold large horns inverted, which are called horns of plenty, because there fall from them a number of fruits, flowers, pieces of coin, and precious stones ; some others have animals at their feet who are consecrated to them, such as the dog and the lion ; some have an owl or an eagle, &c. Well, these arms, these crowns, these flowers, these animals and birds are called the *attributes* of the different divinities beside whom they are placed. Now when you hear this expression made use of, I hope you will be able to understand it, and that you will even be able to use it yourself appropriately.

The most ancient of all the gods was, according to the Greeks, Coelus (Heaven). His wife was Cybele, or Vesta, who was none other than the Earth, and who, on that account, was represented under the figure of a venerable woman, seated in a chariot drawn by lions, her head crowned with towers and battlemented walls ; she held a key in her hand, to signify that the earth incloses treasures. (Plate V. fig. 9.)

This goddess, when she was worshipped under the name of Vesta, presided over the sacred fire which renders the earth fertile ; and for this reason certain priestesses called Vestals were intrusted with keeping up in



her temple at Rome a fire which was never to be extinguished.

It is related that the plague having broken out in Rome (shortly after the expulsion of Tarquin the Proud, if I recollect rightly), the Romans consulted an oracle, who declared that the scourge would never cease until the statue of Vesta had been brought into a temple that had just been consecrated to her. But the vessel which conveyed this statue, having entered the Tiber, stuck so fast in the sand that no strength could extricate it, until a vestal called Claudia, having fastened her girdle to the ship, drew it into the city itself, without appearing to make the slightest effort. Everybody cried out, "A miracle! a miracle!" and, assuredly, it would have been truly miraculous, if, indeed, such a fable could be believed by reasonable people.

Cœlus and Vesta had a great number of children, the two most distinguished of whom were Titan and Saturn. Titan, who was the eldest of the family, should have been king of the whole world; but Cybele, who preferred the other brother to him, because he was more docile, managed by her caresses and prayers to induce Titan to give up his crown to Saturn, provided, however, the latter would promise never to bring up a male child, but to devour immediately all the little boys that his wife Rhea should bring into the world.

I need not tell you that all this is nothing but a ridiculous fable, for there never has been a father so unnatural as to eat his own children; but you will better understand the meaning of this singular tale when you know that Saturn was the image of Time, who does, in truth, devour his children, since there is no man who can live for ever. (See Plate V. fig. 8.)





MYTHOLOGIE DES GRECS ET DES LATINS.

Pl. II.



*Hermès god.*

*Fig. 9.*



*Fig. 10.*

*Janus god.*

JANUS.

However, Rhea, who was a good mother, could not without grief see her husband devour all her little boys, and only leave her little girls. She, therefore, formed a plan for saving three of her children, whom she called Jupiter, Neptune, and Pluto ; and when Saturn, their father, who, doubtless, like the ogre in " Little Thumb," smelt fresh meat, demanded these poor innocents for his supper, she served up to him three great stones, with which the god most probably feigned to be satisfied. The three children were confided to discreet and charitable persons, who brought them up secretly, lest Saturn should discover them.

Some time after, Titan, having learnt the deception that Rhea had practised towards her husband, immediately declared war against Saturn, and driving him from Olympus (one of the highest mountains of Greece, where the ancients supposed the dwelling of the gods to be), he forced him to take refuge in Italy, where the banished god was received with open arms by the good king Janus, who then reigned in Latium.

There Saturn, having with the help of his friend Janus established a little kingdom for himself, rendered the inhabitants so happy, that the period while these princes reigned on the earth is generally called the Golden Age, because men were then gentle and virtuous, and no one ever thought of doing any evil to his fellow-creatures.

When I mentioned king Janus to you just now, my little friends, you doubtless recollected the god with two faces, whose temple at Rome remained open during war, and was closed in time of peace, as the Roman history relates. (Pl. VI. fig. 10.) It was, in fact, this good prince himself who, after his death, had received divine honors

from the people of Etruria and Latium, the countries over which he had reigned ; he gave his name to the month of January, the first of the year. Mount Janiculus, one of the seven hills of the city of Rome, was consecrated to him ; and as he was considered one of the gentlest and most prudent of the gods, he was appointed guardian of the door of every house, called in Latin Janua, that so he might preserve the inhabitants from evil.

But Janus was not, my children, the only one among the gods devoted to this protective care. There were besides, in each Roman habitation, certain little gods called Lares and Penates, who had, it is said, some connexion with the Cabiri of Egypt.

The first named were the guardians of the house, and they were sometimes represented under the form of a dog, because this faithful animal, by his vigilance and his bark, keeps thieves at a distance. The others were gods of the domestic hearth—that is to say, of the place where the family kept up the sacred fire. These were represented as two young men seated, each armed with a lance, while a large dog couched at their feet. They were generally placed in the most retired part of the house, where a lamp was kept constantly burning before them. Each Roman family had its especial Penates, which they carried with them whenever they changed their place of abode. But the Lares always remained stationary in the house to which they were attached. There were also Lares, who were intrusted with the care of the public roads, the streets, fields, and vessels. Their statues were to be seen everywhere ; and slaves, whom their masters had freed, hung their chains upon them in testimony of their gratitude. Now, when you find the domestic gods spoken of

in any book of history, you will know that this name was given to the Lares and Penates.

### QUESTIONS FOR EXAMINATION.

Whence did the Greeks derive their gods? and into what country did they carry this worship?

For what especial reason should the Greek and Latin mythology be studied?

In what way might each divinity be distinguished?

Describe an attribute, and mention some of them.

Which were the most ancient of all the gods?

How was Cybele or Vesta represented?

Over what did this goddess preside when worshipped under the name of Vesta?

What was the office of the Vestals?

Relate the story regarding the vestal Claudia.

Which were the two most eminent of the children of Cœlus and Vesta?

On what conditions did Saturn receive the sovereignty?

What is signified by this singular fable?

How did Rhea save three of her sons? and what were their names?

How were the children taken care of?

How did Titan act when he discovered the trick?

Who received the exiled god?

How did Saturn govern his kingdom on the earth? and what was the age called during which he and Janus reigned?

How is king Janus described in the Roman history? and what is told of his temper?

To what did he give his name? and what was consecrated to him?

What was Janus's especial office?

What other gods were devoted to the business of protection?

What was the office of the Lares? and how were they represented?

What did the Penates keep watch over?



How were the Penates represented? and where generally placed?  
Were both the Lares and Penates considered transportable?  
What other Lares were there? and how did slaves honor them?

---

JUPITER.

Rhea, fearing that Saturn might discover what had become of the little boys whom she had saved from his voracity, had put them out to nurse with some good nymphs who lived on Mount Ida in Crete, one of the islands of the Grecian Archipelago. These nymphs, who were virtuous and discreet persons, took great care of the children, who were all three fed with the milk of a goat called Amalthea; and, as they cried a great deal, the nymphs invented a kind of dance, in which they struck repeated blows on brass vessels, in order, by this stunning noise, to prevent Saturn and Titan from hearing the cries of the little monkeys. But, as we have just seen, this precaution was quite unavailing, for the latter, having discovered the trick, drove Saturn from heaven; and Jupiter, Neptune, and Pluto were obliged to seek another retreat.

Meanwhile, my young friends, Jupiter, having grown up, took possession of Olympus, and became master of thunder. He made war against the sons of Titan, immense giants, who had heaped several mountains one upon another, in order to climb up to heaven; the young god struck them with his thunderbolt, and several of these monsters were buried under the mountains that they had raised. This victory was the more honorable to Jupiter,



that the other divinities, his brothers and sisters, had, at the approach of the Titans, abandoned him, in order to take refuge in Egypt, where, not to be recognised, they had taken the form of different animals, as the Greeks relate ; and thus he had the merit of saving the celestial kingdom without any aid.

But scarcely was the victory achieved, when the gods, forgetting their fright, hastened to the conqueror on Olympus, where they paid him a thousand compliments on his bravery. These congratulations pleased Jupiter, who had a great and generous soul ; and to show that he forgave their having abandoned him in danger, from which he had delivered himself without their help, he married his sister Juno, a thing not unprecedented in those days, and divided the empire of the world with his two brothers, Neptune and Pluto. To the first, he gave the empire of the sea, and to the latter, that of the infernal regions. Nor did Jupiter keep the worst part for himself ; he reserved for his share the control of heaven, which he made the abode of the gods, and of the earth, where he loved to make frequent little excursions under the form of a simple mortal, as we shall see hereafter.

As I have spoken to you of the thunderbolt with which Jupiter struck the Titans, you ought to know something of the workmen who fabricated this terrible weapon, which was always to be seen in the god's right hand. They were called Cyclops, and were believed to be the sons of Neptune. These Cyclops were monstrous giants, skilful blacksmiths, who had only one eye in the middle of the forehead. It was supposed that the workshops of these formidable artisans were placed in the entrails of the earth, and that the torrents of flame and smoke vomited

by certain volcanoes were produced by the furnaces of their forges. I believe it has been explained to you in the Grecian history, how this fable of the Cyclops must be understood, and I feel sure you have not yet forgotten its signification.

Jupiter, now finding himself the most powerful of the gods, wished to have a cup-bearer; that is, an attendant, who should be able to pour out to him the Nectar, which was the liquor drunk by the gods of Olympus. Looking down one day from the height of heaven, he perceived on a mountain a youth of rare beauty engaged in hunting. He was called Ganymede, and was the son of a king of Troy. Immediately the god, assuming the form of an eagle, descended to the mountain, and snatching up Ganymede, carried him to Olympus, where he made him his cup-bearer. But Ganymede having acquitted himself awkwardly, Jupiter placed him in a constellation, which at the present day is still called Aquarius; and Hebe, the goddess of youth, was deputed to fill the same place at the table of the gods.

Jupiter was represented under the figure of a majestic man, with a long beard, seated upon a throne, and holding a thunderbolt in one hand, while with the other he grasped a sceptre, the symbol of omnipotence. (Pl. VI. fig. 11.) At his feet was seen an eagle, which was consecrated to him, as being the strongest and most courageous of birds. A great number of temples were dedicated to him under different names in the various countries of Europe and Asia.

You doubtless remember the temple of Olympia, where stood the celebrated and admired statue of Jupiter, the work of the sculptor Phidias; and also the one built to him

by Romulus in Rome, under the name of Jupiter Stator, which signifies one who arrests ; because during the battle against the Sabines, Romulus had persuaded this god to arrest the flight of his soldiers.

This divinity was also worshipped by the Egyptians under the name of Ammon, in the famous temple in the midst of the African desert, which was visited by Alexander the Great ; the god was there represented with ram's horns, because in the war against the Titans he had for a moment assumed the form of this animal ; but we must rather believe that Jupiter Ammon was none other than Osiris, the god of the Egyptians, whose head, as I told you not long since, was sometimes seen with this head-dress, as being the symbol of strength and courage.

It would be impossible for me, my little friends, to recall to your recollection in this place, all the other temples, and all the surnames of this celebrated god ; but I must not forget to tell you that his priests called Corybantes or Dactyli, while going through the ceremonies of their worship, imitated the noisy dance which the nymphs of Mount Ida had invented to prevent Titan from hearing the cries of Jupiter and his brothers.

Such was the power of this god, who was called by the ancients the father of gods and of men, that it was enough for him to frown to make all Olympus tremble ; and when he sneezed, the whole world was shaken to its very foundations.

This supreme divinity, who was liable to take cold, just as you and I are, will doubtless seem a very extraordinary sort of person to you ; but I have warned you that Mythology is nothing but a tissue of ingenious fables, the

hidden sense of which you will better understand when you are more advanced in your studies.

### QUESTIONS FOR EXAMINATION.

Where did the nymphs intrusted with Rhea's sons live?

How were the children fed?

What device did the nymphs contrive to drown the children's cries?

How did it succeed?

What exploits did Jupiter perform after attaining his growth?

How did his brothers and sisters act at the approach of the Titans?

How did they behave to him after his victory? and whom did he marry?

How did he divide the empire of the world?

What did he reserve for himself?

Who manufactured Jupiter's thunderbolts?

Describe the Cyclops and their workshops.

How did Jupiter provide himself with a cup-bearer?

What became of Ganymede?

Who succeeded him in his office?

How was Jupiter represented?

What bird was consecrated to him?

Mention some of his celebrated temples.

What name was given him in his temple at Rome? and why?

Under what surname was he worshipped in Egypt?

What God was Jupiter-Ammon confounded with among the Egyptians?

How was he there represented?

What were his priests called? and what particular ceremonies did they perform in his worship?

How was the great power of this god shown?



## JUNO AND MERCURY.

Now you must know, my little friends, that the goddess Juno, whom Jupiter had married, was not very amiable ; she was suspicious, jealous, proud, slanderous, above all passionate, and often tormented her husband by her peevish humor.

One day, Jupiter, worn out with so much bickering, resolved to choose another wife among simple mortals, and cast his eye on the young Io, daughter of a king of Argos, called Inachus. This princess was as beautiful, and more amiable than Juno, though she was not a goddess ; but Juno, having discovered Jupiter's design, pursued the poor girl so furiously, that he was obliged to metamorphose her into a heifer, in order to save her from the fury of the queen of the gods.

At length, some time afterwards, Juno, who did not at first know what was become of her rival, discovered her metamorphosis, and besought Jupiter so earnestly to give her that little cow, that the god dared not refuse her.

But scarcely had Juno gained possession of Io, than fearing lest her husband should carry her off, and restore her to her original form, she placed her under the care of a man with a hundred eyes, fifty of which at least remained open, while he slept with the other fifty ; this man was called Argus, and there never was a more faithful and vigilant guardian.

Hereupon Jupiter ordered his messenger Mercury, a dexterous and intelligent youth, to kill this indefatigable watchman, and to rescue Io from Juno's anger.

The undertaking was not an easy one ; since it was



necessary to devise some plan for surprising Argus ; but Mercury, who was provided with wings on both his head and feet, in order that he might the more promptly execute his master's orders, possessed besides a number of other talents. For instance, he played on the flute to perfection, excelled in all sorts of sleight-of-hand tricks, and it is even said that thieves had chosen him as their patron, because of his acknowledged cleverness in whatever requires cunning.

Mercury was in truth the most busy of the gods, for he was expected to see that merchants were honest in their dealings, to watch over the safety of the public roads, and moreover, daily to conduct the souls of the dead to the infernal regions.

It was the statues of this god, which were often placed in the streets by the Greeks, as those of the god Janus were by the Romans, that Alcibiades was accused of having broken in the public squares of Athens ; and I need not remind you in this place, of what is related in the Grecian History regarding this subject. Now, Mercury, who, notwithstanding his dexterity, could not think by what trick to cheat the vigilance of Argus, bethought him of going to the god of sleep, who was called Morpheus, to ask the god to furnish him with some means of closing the hundred eyes of this indefatigable guardian at once.

Morpheus, although he was a god, did not make much noise in the world ; he had established his abode in a country where the most complete silence always reigned, and his palace was impervious to the rays of the sun. Never in this retreat was heard either the crowing of cocks or the barking of dogs ; the tread of a mouse would have been heard ; and Mercury, notwithstanding the lightness of his winged feet, did not enter without precaution, for fear

of too suddenly rousing the god, whose aid he came to seek.

Morpheus was lying on a bed of ebony, over which were hung bunches of poppies, a plant possessing the property of inducing sleep. On his head was a crown of the same sort of flowers, and he seemed plunged in profound repose. Around him fluttered the airy Dreams, a sort of gods who cause the sometimes pleasant, sometimes painful dreams of mortals; and in one corner, Mercury thought he perceived the Night-mare, the most hideous of all dreams, under the distorted figure of a squatting ape.

The Night-mare, my little friends, rarely visits temperate people, or those whose consciences are tranquil; but it often disturbs the slumber of those who indulge in gluttony, or have some wicked action to reproach themselves with.

Mercury very gently made his request to Morpheus, and the god, half opening his eyes, stretched out his arms, and, after gaping three times, presented him with a handful of poppies, which would have the effect of putting Argus to sleep as soon as should be convenient. He then turned over on the other side, and, without even waiting to be thanked, fell asleep again. Mercury, who had something else to do, hastened to quit this silent palace, where sleep already began to gain upon him, and rapidly directed his steps towards the meadow, where the sharp-sighted Argus was guarding the cow Io.

As soon as the fierce guardian saw the god, though at a great distance, he called out to him to go away; but the latter, not heeding this command, began to play on his flute an air which was very fashionable at that time, which so delighted Argus, that he allowed Mercury to approach, in

order the better to hear his music ; but the cunning creature, still holding his flute in one hand, shook the poppies that Morpheus had given him with the other, upon which Argus, whose hundred eyes had been wide open a moment before, began to close them one after the other. Scarcely was the last eye closed, when Mercury, springing upon him, cut off his head ; and restoring Io to her natural form, he carried her to Egypt, where Juno, at length, lost all trace of her.

This goddess, in despair at the death of so excellent a servant, and still more so at the disappearance of her rival, changed Argus into a peacock, and scattered the hundred eyes which had belonged to the incomparable watchman over the tail of this beautiful bird. From that time, the peacock was consecrated to Juno, and she is often represented seated in a light car drawn by two of these birds. (See Pl. VII. fig. 12.)

Before quitting Mercury, whom we shall doubtless again encounter in some of the journeys he was constantly making from one end of the universe to the other, I must call your attention to the winged stick which he held in his right hand, and which was called the Caduceus. This stick possessed the property of re-uniting whatever had been divided by anger. One day, in order to test its power, the god having perceived two serpents fighting together, struck them with this rod, and the serpents clinging to it could never be shaken off. This is the reason that we see them intertwined around the Caduceus in all the statues of Mercury. (Pl. VII. fig. 13.) Meanwhile, Juno, seeing what advantage Jupiter derived from the skill of his messenger, wished also to have one whom she might intrust with her secret commissions, and to whom

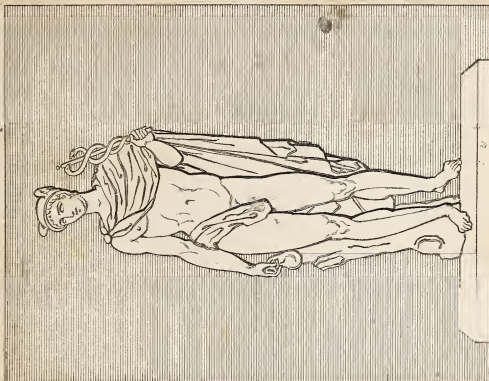




Budet Del.

Fig. 12.

JUNON.



18. Le Roy sculp.

Fig. 13.

MERCURE.





she could confide her letters when she chanced to write any, for the gods had not invented the post; most probably, they were not yet aware of the convenience of it.

It was a young girl, called Iris, who was both discreet and docile, whom Juno chose for this difficult office, which requires both caution and discretion; and the goddess made her a present of a beautiful dress of three colors, the lustre of which traced in the air that line of light which we call the Rainbow.

I need not, I think, explain to you here, that this pretended robe of Iris is nothing else than a phenomenon both natural and easy to be explained; and, doubtless, pains have been taken to enable you to understand, by the help of a glass prism, that the colored bow which is seen in the sky after a storm, is the effect produced by the rays of the sun playing across the clouds, which are still loaded with water.

The goddess Juno had several children, who have all been extremely celebrated; her eldest daughter was Hebe, the goddess of youth, whom Jupiter appointed to pour out nectar at the table of the gods, in the place of Gany-mede. One day, when, in a fit of anger against Jupiter, Juno stamped her foot upon the ground, there came out of it, all at once, a beautiful young man, completely armed, his head being covered with a helmet of gold; his mother gave him the name of Mars, and he was acknowledged as the god of war.

Mars is generally represented under the figure of a warrior, armed *cap-à-pie*, and near him a cock, the most vigilant of birds, because vigilance is one of the first qualities of the warrior. Sometimes, also, Mars is seated in a chariot drawn by fiery horses, which are driven by

Bellona, a goddess who shared with him the direction of battles.

The worship of Mars was not carried to any extent among the Greeks; but the Romans raised several magnificent temples to him, because they believed Romulus to be the son of this god. The ancient Etruscans worshipped him under the form of a lance planted in the earth.

Juno had, besides, another son, called Vulcan, who was so very ugly when he was born, that when Jupiter saw him, he threw him from heaven down to the earth. The poor god was thenceforward lame, in consequence of his fall; and his father, to compensate him for this accident, made him king of the Cyclops, appointing him to direct the manufacture of thunderbolts by these skilful blacksmiths. Vulcan was therefore confined to the subterranean abodes where the Cyclops had established their workshops; and he showed himself but seldom in Olympus, where, indeed, he would not have been very welcome to the other gods, so dirty was he and blackened with smoke.

Juno was worshipped in Egypt under the form of a cow, or of a woman whose head was surmounted with horns; but then the Egyptians evidently confounded her with the goddess Isis, whose fabulous history has been related to you in their mythology.

#### QUESTIONS FOR EXAMINATION.

What was Juno's character?

How did she treat Io?

With what commission did Jupiter intrust Mercury?

What were Mercury's talents and employments?

How did Mercury proceed in order to execute his commission?

Describe Morpheus's abode.

How did Morpheus aid Mercury? and what was the result?

What became of Argus?

How is Juno often represented?

What is related of Mercury's caduceus?

How did Juno provide herself with a messenger?

What is typified by Iris's robe?

Who were Juno's children?

In what way was Mars born?

How is he generally represented?

Why did the Romans especially raise magnificent temples to him?

Under what form did the ancient Etruscans worship him?

Who was Vulcan? and how came he to be lame?

With what dignity did Jupiter compensate him?

Where did he generally live?

Under what form was Juno worshipped in Egypt?



#### THE EMPIRE OF NEPTUNE.

Let us enter that pretty vessel which we see close to the sea-shore, and suffer ourselves to be carried by the waves to the middle of that liquid plain. We are about to make acquaintance with a set of divinities who are rarely seen out of their own element, and regarding whom mythology relates several very curious fables.

You know that Neptune received the empire of the seas as his portion. The seas cover the greatest portion of the globe. He might, therefore, have been satisfied with the portion which had fallen to him; but it seems he would have preferred some other domain, for he soon quarrelled with Jupiter, who not only deprived him of his sceptre, but even exiled him to the earth.

The god, not knowing what to do with himself, chose a singular trade for a destitute divinity : he became a mason, and went to offer his services to Laomedon, king of Troy, who was then busily occupied in having the walls of his town built. This prince welcomed the banished god, who immediately set about the work ; but when it was finished, the king refused to pay the price that he had agreed upon, and Neptune, indignant at this bad faith, raised up against the new town a marine monster, who ravaged the environs, and overthrew the very walls which had just been finished. It was pronounced by an oracle to be necessary, in order to appease the god's anger, for Laomedon to give his own daughter to be devoured by the monster, which he certainly would have done, if the princess had not been saved from this peril by the courage of a demi-god called Hercules, regarding whom I shall have more than one fable to relate to you. But you will perhaps ask me what a demi-god is ; and I will tell you that this name was given to those heroes, who, after having rendered great services to mankind during their life, received divine honors after death.

Happily for Laomedon, Neptune, having been recalled into his empire by Jupiter, whose anger was appeased, was now entirely occupied with the government of his dominions, and thus the marine god's vengeance was not carried any further. Now you must know, my little friends, that, at that time, the sea was inhabited by a multitude of beautiful nymphs, called Nereids, because they were believed to be the daughters of the oldest of the sea-gods, whose name was Nereus.

One day, when these nymphs appeared on the surface of the water, seated on the silvery backs of dolphins, their heads adorned with pearls and coral, Neptune, who had



not yet thought of marrying, was struck with one of them, the young Amphitrite, who surpassed all her sisters in beauty, and he hastened to ask her in marriage. The beautiful Nereid appeared at first but little disposed to share the empire of the sea with this god, who had the reputation of being rather morose; but afterwards, by the advice of a dolphin, one of her friends, she at length consented to marry Neptune. In gratitude for this signal service, the god placed this dolphin among the celestial signs, whilst Amphitrite, having become queen of the seas, received all the honors belonging to her divinity.

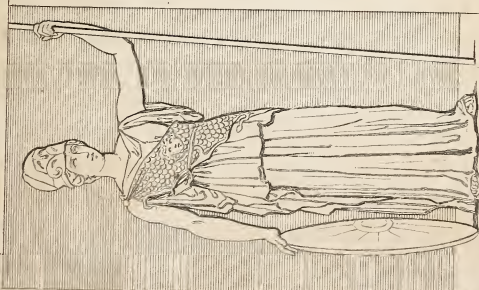
When this goddess made a progress through her dominions, she seated herself on a brilliantly-white mother of pearl couch, over which floated a large purple sail. Her car was drawn by horses whiter than snow, and it was surrounded by Tritons, a sort of monster half man half fish, who, as they advanced, sounded their trumpets, which were made of large, curled shells. Sometimes she would meet the cunning Proteus on her way, driving before him Phocas and porpoises, instead of fat heifers or timid sheep. This god, Proteus, had a singular reputation among the ancients. It was asserted that Neptune, in reward for his services, had endowed him with the knowledge of the past, the present, and the future; but it was not easy to induce him to disclose his knowledge; for, when any one came to consult him, he would suddenly assume all sorts of frightful shapes, in order to drive away those who questioned him. Sometimes he appeared under the figure of a lion, a tiger, a furious wild boar; sometimes he would change himself into water or a blazing fire. The only way to force him to speak, was to surprise him during his sleep, and to tie him so that he could not escape. Amphitrite



was not, however, the only sovereign of the sea. Tethys, daughter of Coelus and Vesta, and wife of Oceanus, shared with her the sway over the watery empire. This goddess had, it was said, a palace, where the sun went to rest every evening. Thus, you see that, at that time, the sea, which now contains nothing but fish and shells, did not want for divinities to watch over and preserve its waves; but still, all these different gods, and even Neptune himself, were not able, at all times, to maintain peace in their moving empire. When old Eolus, the father and guardian of the winds, suffered any of his turbulent children to escape from the bottles where he usually kept them shut up, their rude breath stirred up the waves, and occasioned frightful tempests. Sometimes it became necessary for Neptune to rise upon the waves and compel them to be silent, by threatening them with his anger. The most terrible of these winds were Boreas and Auster, personifications of the north and south winds, so often fatal to navigators. One day, Eolus having forgotten to close the door of the caverns where these furious creatures were shut up, they occasioned such a fearful tempest that, from that time, Sicily was separated from Italy by the violence of the sea.

Neptune's car, drawn by four foaming steeds, whose bodies terminated in fishes' tails, was in the form of a large shell. The wheels were of gold, and seemed to fly over the surface of the waves. The god appeared, seated in this car, holding in his hand a trident, that is, a three-pronged fork; his face was bearded, and his head crowned with marine plants. (See Pl. VIII. fig. 14.)

The horse and the bull were consecrated to this god, and offered in sacrifice to him. It was in honor of Neptune that the Isthmian games were celebrated at Corinth,



*Baschet Del.*

Fig. 15.

MINERVE.

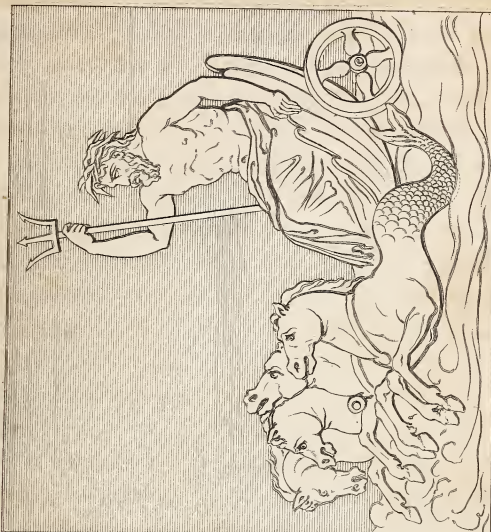


Fig. 14.

*J. L. Levee Sculp.*

NEPTUNE.



where the consul Flaminius caused the liberty of Greece to be proclaimed by a herald, as you doubtless remember to have read in ancient history.

### QUESTIONS FOR EXAMINATION.

Who had received the empire of the sea?

What was the result of Neptune's quarrel with Jupiter? and what trade did the latter take up?

How did Laomedon behave towards him?

Who delivered Laomedon from the penalty he had incurred?

What is meant by a demi-god?

Did Jupiter become reconciled to Neptune?

What were the sea-nymphs called? and whose daughters were they?

What is related of Amphitrite?

How did Neptune reward the friendly dolphin?

In what fashion did Amphitrite make a progress through her dominions?

Who was Proteus? and how was he accompanied?

What were his special powers?

Who was Tethys? and where was her palace?

Describe Eolus and his children.

Which were the most violent of them? and what did they represent?

What was the result of their escape from the cavern?

Describe Neptune's car, and the god's appearance when seated in it.

What animals were consecrated to Neptune?

Where were games celebrated in honor of Neptune? and what name was given to them?



## THE BIRTH OF MINERVA.

One day, Jove\* (this is one of the names sometimes given by the poets to Jupiter) feeling an insupportable pain in his head, ordered Vulcan to cleave his skull with an axe. The remedy, you will say, was worse than the disease; but it produced a marvellous effect; for Wisdom, under the figure of a young and beautiful woman, armed from head to foot, came forth from the brain of the master of the gods, who gave her the name of Minerva. (See Pl. VIII. fig. 15.)

It is a great and ingenious idea, my little friends, that of making Minerva spring from the brain of the sovereign ruler, who must of necessity possess eternal wisdom, since he regulates this wonderful universe.

You will easily understand that this daughter of Jupiter was a model of perfection; as beautiful as the day, for there is nothing so beautiful as wisdom. She devoted herself from her birth to the invention of those arts which the human race were still in need of. To her was attributed the discovery of painting, of writing, and withal that of embroidering with the needle, in which she excelled.

True, Minerva was not exempt from some little defects, which do not seem very compatible with wisdom: she was very susceptible, that is, she was easily offended when jested with, which is certainly no evidence of a good disposition; she was, besides, occasionally severe, somewhat of a scold, and the gods often avoided her society in order to escape her reproaches.

\* In the original "Jupin," answering in French poetry to our poetical appellation for the sovereign of Olympus—"Jove."



One day, a skilful embroiderer called Arachne, boasted in joke of surpassing Minerva in her art ; suddenly, the goddess growing angry, struck her on the fingers with a shuttle, and metamorphosed her into a spider. The shuttle is a small instrument which workwomen formerly made use of in weaving tapestry. It is for this reason, said the Greeks, who were ingenious in explaining everything by fables, that this insect is still so skilful in weaving her webs.

Minerva, who, as you doubtless remember, was considered among the Athenians as the protectress of their city, had a violent quarrel on this subject with her uncle, Neptune; this god maintained that he ought to be the sponsor of the rising city, because it was situated on the borders of his empire; and that, moreover, the Egyptian Cecrops, its founder, had come into the country of the Pelasgians by sea.

Minerva, on the contrary, asserted that wisdom only could bring prosperity to the new city, and that to her alone belonged the right of naming it. This dispute grew so warm, that Jupiter, being called upon as arbiter, decided that the one of the two disputants who should produce the most useful thing, should name the town of Cecrops. On the instant, Neptune striking the sand with his trident, there came out a fiery horse, who bounded off neighing. Minerva in her turn, having lightly touched the earth with the end of her lance, produced a beautiful olive tree, loaded with ripe fruit. Hereupon the gods cried out with one voice, that Minerva had gained the victory, and the goddess gave her name to the town of Athens. I believe I have elsewhere told you this goddess was called in Greek, Athena.

One of the most famous of Minerva's temples was the Parthenon, which the gratitude of the Athenians had led them to build for her in the citadel of their town : a serpent consecrated to the goddess was fed there under the altar, because, among the ancients, this reptile was the emblem of prudence. It was in this temple that the partisans of Cylon, who had taken refuge there, were slain ; and you may remember in what manner Minerva punished this sacrilege, and the service which the Epimenides rendered the Athenians, who were justly troubled with remorse for the deed.

Revenge, a passion which seems so inconsistent with wisdom, whose prominent characteristic ought to be clemency, animated Minerva against three young sisters called the Gorgons, the most beautiful of whom was Medusa.

This young girl, who was vain of her beautiful hair, having had the misfortune to offend the goddess in her temple, the latter, full of resentment, changed poor Medusa's hair into serpents, and gave to this hitherto beautiful face the fatal power of transforming into stone all who looked upon it. This terrible gift made a great number of victims, until a Grecian hero called Perseus, led by Minerva herself, seized the Gorgon by the hair, taking care not to look at her, and cut off her head. From Medusa's blood sprang a winged horse, to whom was given the name of Pegasus, whom we shall meet with in other fables, and of whom Perseus made frequent use. This fable of Perseus vanquishing the Gorgon while under the protection of Minerva, teaches us, my children, that he who allows himself to be guided by wisdom may be sure of escaping the greatest danger.

Minerva is most generally represented as a beautiful woman, with a modest air, and a grave and majestic countenance ; her head is covered with a helmet surmounted by an owl, her right hand armed with a lance, while her left arm supports a buckler, commonly called her *Ægis*, on which is engraved Medusa's head, in memory of that victory.

#### QUESTIONS FOR EXAMINATION.

- How was Minerva born ? and what idea is thereby embodied ?  
Describe Minerva's appearance and accomplishments.  
What was her character ?  
What was her conduct towards Arachne ?  
What was the subject of dispute between her and Neptune ?  
How was this dispute decided ?  
What was Minerva's Greek name ?  
What is said of the Parthenon ?  
Who were the Gorgons ?  
What was Minerva's conduct towards Medusa ?  
Relate the exploit performed by Perseus.  
What did Pegasus spring from ?  
What moral should be conveyed by the fable of Medusa and Perseus ?

---

#### THE CAPTURE OF PROSERPINE.

Among the old Cybele's children, the most remarkable was Ceres, the goddess of harvests ; and in truth, nothing seems more reasonable than to consider the earth as the mother of that goddess who covers it with the gifts which nourish mankind. Ceres, in virtue of her office, appeared

crowned with ears of corn and field-flowers, holding in her hand a sickle, with which reapers gather in their harvests, and sometimes carrying in her arms a sheaf of wheat. (See Pl. IX. fig. 16.) Every year at the return of spring, the Grecians, led by priests of this goddess, carried in procession round the fields, a hog, which they afterwards sacrificed, in order to render this divinity favorable to the labors of agriculture, because that animal, by rooting in the earth with his snout, prevents the grain from shooting.

Now Ceres had a beloved daughter called Proserpine, who was as good as she was beautiful ; but lo and behold, one day while this young creature was amusing herself in the beautiful fields of Sicily, by gathering some of the flowers which covered them, in order to offer a nosegay to her mother, Pluto, god of the infernal regions, perceived her, carried her off in his car, drawn by two horses blacker than ebony, and took her to the kingdom of the dead. (See Pl. IX. fig. 17.)

This god, since Jupiter had given up the infernal regions to him, had not yet been able to find a wife who would consent to share his gloomy empire ; and for fear lest some one should discover the road which he had taken with his prey, he struck the earth with the fork which served him as a sceptre, and thus opened an abyss, which immediately closed again as soon as the dark equipage had plunged into it, carrying off the beautiful Proserpine.

Meantime, my little friends, Ceres, rendered anxious by her daughter's not returning from the fields, where she had permitted her to go to gather nosegays, began to call for her in every direction, and as she could hear nothing of her from anybody, she gave herself up to the most violent





Fig. 16.

CÉRÈS.



Fig. 17.

PLUTON.

Pl. X.





despair. After weeping a long time, she began to reflect that her grief would not restore Proserpine; she therefore set forth, determined to travel over the whole earth until she should find her child, which was a very difficult undertaking, as Pluto had carried her off to the infernal regions.

In this toilsome journey, the unfortunate Ceres had to endure many evils; sometimes she was obliged to climb high mountains, sometimes to cross sterile plains, overpowered with heat and fatigue; but nothing stopped this afflicted mother, for there is nothing so tender and so courageous as the heart of a mother.

One day when, although completely exhausted with hunger, the goddess had not been able to find a single fruit with which to appease her hunger, or, even quench her thirst, she perceived a miserable hovel, where an old woman kindly offered her some excellent broth, which she was cooking, and which was all she had. Ceres accepted this food, common though it was, with pleasure, and was beginning to devour it eagerly, when a little boy, called Stello, having ridiculed the avidity with which she was eating, in spite of the signs made to him by his grandmother, the goddess, to punish his ill-nature, and especially his disobedience, threw the rest of her broth into his face, and changed him into a lizard.

I strongly suspect, my little friends, that this spiteful fellow was displeased to see his grandmamma giving to a stranger the broth that he expected to feast upon, and it was doubtless his anger at this, that induced him to ridicule her voracity; but this was neither polite nor reasonable, and he was justly punished for his fault. Thus, gluttony is often the cause of many other faults; and I know

more than one child, who would never have been either ill-humored or a liar, if he had not been a glutton.

The goddess did not, however, receive such insults in all the places that she passed through; on the contrary, the king Celeus, who was then reigning at Eleusis, in Greece, having recognised her, received her with the greatest respect, and asked her permission to build a temple to her honor, which Ceres granted. This temple of Eleusis became afterwards one of the most famous in Greece, and every four years festivals were there celebrated, which became the occasion of one of the grandest religious solemnities of antiquity. In memory of this kind reception, Ceres instructed Triptolemus, son of Celeus, in the management of the plough, that useful instrument which renders the earth fertile.

After quitting Eleusis, the goddess returned into Sicily, in the hope that she might at length hear some news of her beloved daughter; and in truth her hope was not deceived, for a Naiad, that is to say the nymph of a brook, which flowed, it was said, through the depths of the earth, told her that she had seen Proserpine pass in Pluto's car, across the vast subterranean space which the waters of the brook traversed in their course. Ceres thanked Arethusa—this was the name of the good nymph—and immediately lighting a torch at the fire of Mount Etna (which, as you know, is a frightful volcano), she bravely plunged into the bowels of the earth, and thus reached the infernal regions, where she discovered Proserpine seated beside Pluto, on his throne, but whose beauty had already contracted something of a grave and sinister aspect.

In her grief, the poor mother hoped to soften this pitiless god, and persuade him to restore this well beloved

daughter, but Pluto declared that he would never consent to give her up; and Ceres was obliged to apply to Jupiter in order to obtain justice.

The father of the gods and of men, after having consulted Minerva, decided that Proserpine could only be restored to her mother, provided she had taken no food since her arrival in the infernal regions. Unfortunately, Ascalaphus, cook or steward in Pluto's establishment, declared, that that very morning he had served up to his young mistress an excellent pomegranate, the whole of which she had sucked. Ceres was so irritated on hearing this, that she transformed Ascalaphus into an owl, that dismal bird which never ventures out of its hole but at night; and was reduced to beseeching the master of the gods, to allow her daughter to return to earth during at least half of each year. Jupiter consented to this, notwithstanding Pluto's complaints; and it was decided that Ceres should have her daughter during six months of each year, but that during the other six months she should return to keep company with Pluto in hell, in order to divert his melancholy.

If you sometimes see Ceres represented with a lighted torch, and having at her feet a lizard and an owl, you will remember on what account these several attributes were bestowed upon her.

#### QUESTIONS FOR EXAMINATION.

Who was Ceres?

How was she represented?

What animal was sacrificed to her? and why was such an one selected?

Describe Proserpine.

How, and by whom was she carried off?  
What steps did Ceres take to recover her daughter?  
What was Stello's fault? and how was he punished?  
How was she received by the king of Eleusis?  
How did Ceres hear news of her daughter?  
Where did Ceres light her torch?  
What prevented her being able to rescue her daughter from hell?  
How did she punish Ascalaphus?  
What favor did Ceres at length obtain for her daughter from Jupiter?

---

#### DIANA.

When you are shown a statue or picture representing a beautiful young woman, with a light, airy figure, whose dress is not only very short, but is also drawn up over one knee, her hair tied up at the back of her head, her forehead surmounted by a crescent, her right hand armed with a bow, and having at her feet a hind or an elegant greyhound, you may without hesitation say, that it is the figure of Diana, the daughter of Jupiter and Latona, and goddess of the chase. (See Pl. X. fig. 18.)

Latona having learnt that the implacable Juno was pursuing her, in order to destroy her, threw herself into the sea, where, instead of being drowned, Neptune received her on a floating island, called Delos, which, for the express purpose, he had caused to spring out of the waves with a blow of his trident. There it was, that Diana and Apollo were born, both on the same day—two divinities who were extremely celebrated, for among the Greeks they represented the sun and moon.





*Marbre Del.*

*Fig. 19.*

APOLLON.



*El. Levey sculp.*

*Fig. 18.*

DIANE.



Latona then brought up in the island of Delos her two little children, who were so beautiful and so clever that they were talked of throughout the surrounding countries. A neighboring queen, called Niobe, having heard their graces and amiability much vaunted as they began to grow up, wished to see if all that was said of these young people was true, and had them brought before her; but, as mothers always prefer their own children to all others, she declared that hers were infinitely more beautiful than Latona's, and caused the goddess to be driven away with contempt; but the latter, justly irritated by Niobe's disdain, armed Diana and Apollo with sharp arrows, with which they pierced all this queen's children in her very arms. The unfortunate mother, exasperated by this cruel loss, gave herself up to such deep despair, that Jupiter, touched with pity, transformed her into marble, so that she might have no feeling left.

Diana and her brother being grown up, Jupiter called them to Olympus, where he admitted them into the number of the gods. Hebe poured out to them the nectar which conferred immortality, and Diana was appointed to preside over the chase, which she loved passionately; whilst Apollo was intrusted with the guidance of the chariot of the sun.

Diana was so industrious and so vigilant, that she would not have had sufficient occupation if her only employment had been that of pursuing the inhabitants of the forest; and Jupiter, perceiving this, gave her also the office of guiding the chariot of the moon. It is for this reason that she wears on her forehead the emblem of the crescent, which characterizes this planet. But this charge brought upon her another, which was not probably so much to her

taste. This was, to preside over enchantments, to which the ancient nations yielded a superstitious faith. In fact, as it was at night that magicians were formerly believed to meet together to prepare their sorceries, and as it is during the night that the moon shows herself, it was supposed that Diana took a part in their mysteries, and they gave her the name of Hecate, under which name she was worshipped in hell.

Travellers, before setting out on a journey, sacrificed a black dog to her, in order that she might preserve them from evil accidents during the night; and, on great occasions, a hundred oxen, neither more nor less, were sacrificed to her, which sacrifice was called a *HECATOMB*, from a Greek word signifying a hundred.

Thus, when you hear Diana mentioned, you will recollect that this divinity was worshipped under three different names—Luna in heaven, Diana on the earth, and Hecate in hell.

Meanwhile, my little friends, Diana having obtained Jupiter's permission to remain unmarried, passed her life in wandering over the woods and mountains in pursuit of wild beasts, driving her dogs herself, and followed by a troop of beautiful nymphs, each armed like herself with a bow, and carrying on the shoulder a light quiver furnished with arrows.

One day, when, after a prolonged hunt in very warm weather, she was bathing with her nymphs in a retired grove, through which flowed a limpid stream, Acteon, one of the most intrepid hunters of the country, having lost his way in pursuit of a stag, broke through the bushes, and saw the goddess just as she was coming out of the bath; but Diana, to punish him for his boldness, throwing



some water into his face, changed him immediately into a stag, and his own dogs, mistaking him for the animal they were pursuing, sprang upon him and devoured him.

This was a terrible punishment, was it not, my children, that was inflicted on poor Acteon for a simple indiscretion? and his alarm must have equalled his surprise, when he felt his forehead crowned with an enormous pair of stag's horns, his face stretching out into a snout, and his arms covered with dun-colored hair assuming the slender and delicate form of this nimble animal's legs. We must believe, however, that Diana would not have treated him so severely, had not his conduct appeared to her to proceed from curiosity, and there is no defect which renders the person that gives way to it more contemptible.

Diana, who had refused to accept a husband among the gods, repented of this determination after a time, and chose to marry a simple shepherd of Mount Latmos, called Endymion, who was handsome and amiable; but, as she could not confer immortality upon him, and take him to Olympus, she often would come at night to visit him in his cottage. The ancients believed that when the moon was veiled with clouds, it was because she came down to Endymion while he slept.

The most famous of Diana's temples was that of Epheusus in Ionia, reputed one of the seven wonders of the world, and which Erostratus burned on the very day that Alexander the Great was born in Macedonia. I have told you before what a mad folly induced Erostratus to commit this crime, which reduced to ashes one of the most admirable monuments of antiquity. The statue of the goddess, which was worshipped there, was of ebony, and of the most exquisite workmanship.



## QUESTIONS FOR EXAMINATION.

How may Diana be recognised?  
Whose daughter was she? and where was she born?  
How was the island of Delos created?  
Relate the story regarding Latona and Niobe.  
To what offices were Diana and Apollo appointed?  
Why is Diana represented with a crescent on her forehead?  
Why was she supposed to preside over enchantments?  
What sacrifice was offered to Diana by travellers?  
What was meant by a Hecatomb?  
Under what three names was Diana worshipped?  
How did Diana pass her time?  
What was Acteon's fault? and how was it punished?  
Whom did Diana marry?  
To what did the ancients attribute the eclipse of the moon?  
Where was the most famous of Diana's temples?  
By whom was it destroyed? and for what purpose?



## APOLLO AND DAPHNE.

Diana's brother was not placed by Jupiter in a less elevated position than his sister. With his forehead crowned with dazzling rays, he was intrusted with the chariot of the sun, and he was appointed to guide through the regions of the air four beautiful horses, who every day recommenced their course without ever being tired by it.

A young goddess, crowned with roses, and called Aurora, every morning opened the gates of the east, where was situated the glittering palace of the sun. In the evening, the god, with his equipage, went to rest in the palace of Tethys, situated in the west; while Night, a gloomy

divinity, wearing a crown of poppies and having the wings of a bat, spread over the whole universe a large black veil sprinkled with stars.

You will at once see that this fabulous picture signifies the journey daily made across the heavens by the planet which gives us light. You know that the east is the quarter where the sun rises, and where the clouds in fine weather first assume the rosy tint which is called Aurora; while you also know, that it is in the west that the sun disappears from our sight.

The ancients, in order to explain the disappearance of this planet at the close of day, supposed that it plunged into the ocean in order to give place to the shades of night, and thus disguised under ingenious fictions the true causes of the great phenomena of nature.

Apollo had a son called Esculapius, who was considered the inventor of the art of medicine; he had consecrated his youth to the study of the properties of plants and minerals, and succeeded in curing the greater number of those sick persons who consulted him. Pluto went one day to Jupiter, and complained that since Esculapius had discovered the art of healing, the number of the dead whom Mercury was in the habit of bringing to him every day was greatly diminished. The father of the gods, indignant at an insignificant doctor's daring to resist the decrees of Heaven and Hell, struck him with his thunderbolt, and thus occasioned the loss of a great number of good receipts, which Esculapius had not had time to impart to his pupils.

Apollo, however, having heard of his son's misfortune, became so furious that nothing could appease him, and descending immediately to the volcanoes of Lemnos,

where the Cyclops were at work, he pierced them with his arrows, to punish them for having manufactured the thunder with which Esculapius had been struck.

Meanwhile, my little friends, Vulcan no longer hearing the strokes of his workmen's hammers in their forges at Lemnos, was soon informed of the consequences of Apollo's vengeance, and ascending Olympus as quickly as his lameness would allow him to do, he complained to Jupiter of the bold creature who had dared to destroy with his arrows the Cyclops, whom he considered his most skilful artisans.

The father of the gods, frowning so as to make all Olympus tremble, summoned the imprudent Apollo to appear before him, and after severely reprimanding him, drove him from heaven. He was obliged by this decree to descend to the earth, where he became a shepherd, as Neptune had formerly become a mason. During this time, as the earth could not do without the sun, the glittering chariot of this planet continued its daily course, its excellent horses never straying a single step from the path marked out to them.

Apollo, having become a shepherd, soon reconciled himself to his disgrace. Retiring into the mountains of Thessaly and Greece, he amused himself with guarding a flock of sheep, and instructing the rude shepherds whom he met with in the pasture-grounds. The degraded god was a good musician, and played on the flute with even more skill than Mercury. This god himself, in one of his accustomed journeys, having paid his brother a visit, received from him the gift of a wand of hazel, of which he made his caduceus; and in return, he presented to Apollo a beautiful tortoise-shell, wherein he stretched four cords,

which under his fingers gave forth the most melodious sounds. This instrument was called a lyre; and when afterwards a more elegant form was given to it, and a greater number of strings attached to it, the Greeks used it as an accompaniment to the songs of Homer, and their other poets. In a short time, the Thessalian shepherds, heretofore so rude and untaught, were no longer to be recognised; most of them had become musicians in imitation of Apollo; and every evening the god amused himself by making the young shepherds of the neighborhood who met together to hear him, dance upon the grass to the sound of his lyre.

Of all the nymphs of Mount Ossa, where Apollo often led his sheep to graze, there was none more beautiful and amiable than Daphne, daughter of the river Peneus, whose waters fertilized the rich fields of Thessaly. Apollo had often met her in the meadows, driving a pretty flock of sheep whiter than snow. He would have liked to enter into conversation with her, while their lambs were tranquilly grazing under the care of their faithful dogs; but Daphne knew that a well bred young girl ought not to converse with a young man whom she is not acquainted with. Besides, she was, I believe, one of Diana's nymphs, and her mistress had made her promise never to marry. Thus, she long avoided meeting Apollo, and as soon as she caught the most distant sound of his flute, would hide herself in the most retired groves, where she well knew the shepherd dared not follow her.

One day, however, the god having met her in a by-path, began to speak to her in so touching a voice, that Daphne had a great fancy to stop a moment to listen to him; but quickly recollecting that she was not at liberty to do so, she began to run with all her might, in order to avoid the



young shepherd, whose language interested her in spite of herself, for Apollo had been considered before his exile the most intellectual of the gods of Olympus.

On this occasion, the god attempted to follow her; and although Daphne was almost as nimble as the hinds that she sometimes pierced with her arrows while hunting with Diana, he had nearly reached her, when the young nymph, rushing towards the banks of the Peneus, cried out with a doleful voice, stretching her arms towards the river, "Oh! my father, will you not come to the help of your daughter?" As she uttered these words, she suddenly felt her feet rooted to the ground; her arms, which were still elevated, then grew stiff; her fingers stretched out into flexible branches, adorned with a beautiful green foliage; and all her body became covered with a light bark. Daphne had been changed into a laurel-tree.

Apollo reached her just in time to witness her metamorphosis; penetrated with grief, he gathered some leaves of this beautiful tree, whose foliage is evergreen, and formed a crown of it, which he placed on his head. From that time, the laurel-tree was held sacred to him, and the god ordained that henceforth such a crown should be the recompense of great poets and warriors.

The banished god was not happy in his friendships during his sojourn on the earth. The hunter Cyparissus, whom he had preferred to all his other companions, having one day killed in mistake a pretty little hind that he had brought up himself, was so deeply concerned in consequence, that he besought the gods to take his life. Apollo, seeing him consumed with grief, changed him into a cypress, which thenceforward was considered the tree of mourning: and therefore this funereal tree is seldom



planted except on tombs, where its presence indicates grief and sadness.

A young shepherd called Hyacinthus, whose friendship seemed likely to console Apollo for the loss of Cyparissus, had not a better fate than this unfortunate hunter. One day, while the exiled god was beguiling his banishment by playing with Hyacinthus at a game of quoits, which consisted in throwing heavy disks of lead with skill, Apollo was so unfortunate as to strike the forehead of his dear comrade, who, falling lifeless in his arms, was soon at the gates of death. In vain the god called him by the most tender names; in vain he wiped with a trembling hand the blood which flowed in torrents from his wound; nothing could recall him to life, and the unfortunate Hyacinthus expired under his eyes. Apollo, inconsolable at a misfortune of which he was the involuntary cause, desired that the memory of his friend should be as lasting as his grief, and he gave the name of hyacinth to a beautiful flower which sprang instantly from the blood of the unfortunate young man—a sad looking flower, and pale as the one whose memory it consecrates.

In the meanwhile, my little friends, the gods, who had grown very dull since Apollo's exile, conjured Jupiter to recall him to Olympus, where his absence had left a great void. Jupiter, who also regretted his son, yielded readily to their prayers; and this agreeable god resumed his place among the Immortals, which no one else had been able to fill. Esculapius also received immortality; and in a temple raised to him by the inhabitants of Cos, an island of the Grecian Archipelago, the sick were accustomed to write on the walls the different remedies by means of which their maladies were either cured or allevi-

ated. This was, during several centuries, the only school to which the physicians of Greece, without even excepting the great Hippocrates, resorted for the study of their art, one so beneficial to humanity.

#### QUESTIONS FOR EXAMINATION.

- What was Apollo's business?
- Who were Aurora and Night?
- What is signified by this fabulous picture?
- Who was Esculapius?
- What complaint did Pluto make against him? and what was the result?
- How did Apollo avenge Esculapius?
- What was the consequence thereof to Apollo?
- How did Apollo pass his time on the earth?
- What present did Apollo make to Mercury? and what did he receive in return?
- What use was made of Apollo's lyre by the Greeks?
- Who was Daphne?
- Relate the story regarding her.
- What honor did Apollo confer on the laurel-tree?
- What was the story of Cyprisus?
- What was Hyacinthus's fate?
- How came Apollo to be restored to heaven?
- What became finally of Esculapius?
- How were prescriptions for the sick preserved in his temple?

---

#### THE FALL OF PHAETON.

While Apollo was living in exile on the earth, he had a son born, who was called Phaeton, and whom he endowed with a thousand good qualities. This young man was amiable, witty, and remarkably beautiful; but all these

valuable qualities were obscured by a silly vanity, the most dangerous of all defects, since it is generally the companion of folly. Although the son of a god, Phaeton was but a simple mortal; and his comrades often ridiculed, and with reason, his ridiculous self-love, for he never ceased talking, on all occasions, of his father, the Sun, and his grandfather Jupiter.

I have occasionally met with children, who, like Phaeton, would boast of the merit or wealth of their parents, as if that made them better or more learned; and I have remarked that these little boasters never turned out well, because they fancied that the advantages of their family would serve them instead of knowledge and common sense.

Now, it happened that one day, when Phaeton was sporting with his comrades, engaged in some game common at that day, this youngster, according to custom, boasted of his celestial ancestry; upon which his companions, to provoke him, began to laugh aloud at his ridiculous pretensions. Any other than Phaeton would have profited by this lesson, but instead of this, the proud youth grew extremely angry; and when he found that no one would believe his illustrious origin, he swore that he would go to his father, and ask to be allowed to drive the chariot of the sun for a whole day, so that no one might longer doubt his being the son of that magnificent divinity. His comrades defied him to do this, whereupon the giddy brain set out to climb the high mountains which led to the palace of the sun.

The way was neither short nor easy, which led to the dazzling abode where Apollo was seated on a throne, radiant with light, surrounded with a multitude of golden

columns, in which were incrustated millions of diamonds and carbuncles. Nevertheless, Phaeton, with the help of some propitious divinities, succeeded in reaching it; but his eyes were so dazzled when he found himself in this marvellous abode, which shot forth torrents of light, that he could not, without great difficulty, fix them on the god, who smiled upon him from the midst of his glory. "Oh! my father," cried he, "will you suffer your son to be outraged by a set of young fools, who dispute his noble origin?"

"My son," replied Apollo, holding out his hand to him, "I swear to you, by the Styx, that I will instantly grant whatever you ask, in order to punish the impertinence of your deriders: say then, Phaeton, what it is you desire, and you shall be satisfied."

Now, you must know that the Styx was a river of hell, by which the gods sometimes swore; but that this oath, uttered by them, was an irrevocable engagement which they dared not fail to fulfil, under pain of being deprived, during long years, of nectar and divine honors.

Phaeton, re-assured by the kindness of his father, then besought him to allow him to drive the chariot of the sun during one day. The god, on hearing the rash youth's prayer, saw, but too late, the fault he had committed in binding himself by that terrible oath, which the gods were generally afraid of pronouncing, and endeavored to dissuade his son from this foolish undertaking, by offering to satisfy his self-love in any other way. "Imprudent boy," said the god, scarcely restraining his tears; "are you aware that such an attempt is beyond the power of a simple mortal? You know not the dangers to which you expose yourself: the road you would attempt to travel is



bristling with monsters, and bordered by precipices, which may alarm my coursers, who are accustomed to be driven by a skilful hand. Think you they will not perceive that they are no longer guided by their master? or that you can find any means of rendering them docile? Reflect well on it, Phaeton; your inordinate ambition will prove your destruction, and the whole world may perish with you."

If we had not long known that of all the defects by which young people are injured, there is none more dangerous than vanity, which renders them deaf to the counsels of prudence and friendship, the example of Phaeton, my little friends, would suffice to teach us. In fact, the unfortunate youth persisted in his obstinacy, and his father found himself constrained by his formidable oath to allow him to drive his chariot for that day. Apollo, foreseeing what must happen, did not allow him to depart without repeating his wise counsel, and pointing out to Phaeton the direction he ought to take; but the giddy creature, intoxicated with joy at such a brilliant triumph, would not even listen to him, so great was his self-confidence—an unfailing characteristic of fools.

At first, the horses of the sun followed their accustomed route without perceiving that they were guided by the hand of a novice, because the way was plain, and Phaeton was almost beside himself with joy; but as soon as there occurred some difficulty in the way, the imprudent youth, instead of slackening their pace, only stimulated their ardor, and soon he was no longer able to stop them. And now, quitting the track which they were acquainted with, and plunging in their fright among the stars which surrounded them, sometimes they carried the chariot of the



sun so near the earth, that they set it on fire, and in an instant the largest rivers were dried up; and again, they galloped away with such rapidity, that a sudden chill pervaded the whole globe. On that day, men could not imagine what dreadful confusion was going on in heaven; and the astronomers themselves, fatigued with looking through their telescopes, came to the conclusion that the end of the world was at hand.

Meanwhile, Cybele—who, as you know, was goddess of the earth,—seeing the fountains dried up, the harvests consumed in a few moments by the heat, the trees, with their fruits, withered and falling, and the sea abandoning its shores, cried to Jupiter in a plaintive voice; and the god perceiving Phaeton in the celestial chariot which had been given up to him, would no longer suffer the vain youth to turn the world upside down. Filled with indignation, he seized his thunderbolt, and throwing it with all his might at the giddy youth, precipitated him into the Eridanus, a river of Italy, now called the Po.

Cygnus, probably Phaeton's only friend—for the vain are beloved by very few—was so afflicted at his loss, that having stooped over the brink of the river, to see if the waves would not bring him the imprudent young man's body, he there died of grief. Apollo, who shared his grief, changed him into a swan—that beautiful white bird, who still frequents the banks of rivers, where it always seems to be seeking something. The ancients believed that at the approach of death, this bird, who is generally almost mute, warbled a sad and harmonious strain, of unequalled sweetness.

The Heliades, Phaeton's sisters, equally inconsolable for his sad end, bewailed him during four entire months. The

gods, touched with their grief, metamorphosed them into poplars—trees which flourish best on the banks of rivers—and transformed the tears that they had shed into drops of amber, in memory of their sisterly affection.

#### QUESTIONS FOR EXAMINATION.

Who was Phaeton? and what was his character?

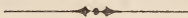
What step did he take to prove his illustrious descent?

What were the consequences of his gaining his point?

How did Jupiter punish his presumption?

What became of Cygnus?

Who were the Heliades? and what became of them?



#### THE MUSES.

One of the most ingenious allegories, my children, is that which supposes the arts and sciences to be the children of Jupiter and of Memory, who was personified by a goddess called Mnemosyne. Nine beautiful nymphs, called the Muses, presided over these precious gifts of the human intellect; and Apollo, in his character of musician and inventor of the lyre, was considered their brother and friend. It was in their company, on Mount Parnassus, which was the place of their abode, that he forgot the tedium of Olympus, and the distress which Phaeton's pride had caused him. These Muses must indeed have formed a very agreeable society; Calliope, the eldest, was the goddess of Eloquence, that is to say, of the art of speech; Melpomene presided over Tragedy, Thalia over Comedy, Polyhymnia over Rhetoric, which is the art of

writing with elegance; Clio was the muse of History, Urania of Astronomy; Erato was invoked by poets, Euterpe by musicians, and Terpsichore by dancers.

These goddesses were all represented with the attributes of their different arts, that is to say, with something indicative of the talent which they inspired; thus Clio held a set of tablets, on which she was preparing to write history; Melpomene appeared richly clad, because tragedy only depicts the misfortunes of kings and heroes. Among the ancients, this sort of theatrical representation was usually accompanied with music, and this muse's name signified in the Greek tongue, "one who only expressed herself in song." Thalia, on the contrary, was represented with a mask in her hand, because formerly comedians were in the habit of covering their faces with a mask, formed to imitate the appearance of the personage represented by them. Euterpe was surrounded by musical instruments, and the learned Urania by globes and compasses, instruments belonging to astronomy. Thus it is not difficult to recognise at the first glance, which particular muse is represented by a picture or statue, and you need only observe what attributes have been given her, in order to designate her by name.

In forming this collection of clever and learned nymphs, the Greeks only intended to honor the arts and sciences, which raise man above his kind, and assimilate him to divinity. Now you can understand, I think, why Apollo delighted in his nine sisters, who, all of them amiable, cultivated, and witty, formed the most agreeable society that can be imagined.

One day, this god having learnt that a concert was to be given by a neighboring king, who had invited all the

musicians of the neighborhood to make trial of their skill at his court, persuaded his sisters to accompany him to this entertainment, where they would be certain to win all the crowns it might please them to dispute. They were embarrassed for a moment how to find a carriage which could transport all the family together, for the learned group only possessed a winged horse; however, this wonderful animal, who was none other than Pegasus, sprung from Medusa's blood, as I mentioned to you not long since, transported them rapidly, one after the other, to the court, where they were announced as they arrived, and where Apollo also presented himself at the same time.

The most celebrated musician of that country was called Marsyas; he was a satyr, a sort of divinity of the woods, with goat's feet; and having found by chance at the bottom of a fountain, a flute, which Minerva sometimes made use of, had succeeded in drawing from this instrument the most harmonious sounds.

This Marsyas did not know Apollo, but perceiving that he played on the lyre, he challenged the god, on condition that the vanquished person should be placed at the disposal of the conqueror. Apollo consented to this arrangement, and a large circle of amateurs was formed around the performers, in order to determine to which of the two the victory should belong.

First, Marsyas produced the most delightful harmony; sometimes he imitated the song of the nightingale on a beautiful evening in spring, and the cooing of the dove; sometimes he made his flute roar like the waves of the sea in a tempest, or whistle like the wind through a vast forest agitated by a storm. The enchanted auditors alternately glowed with pleasure or grew pale with alarm, so



complete was the illusion he produced; already indeed were the crowns prepared for the skilful performer, and no one could believe that Apollo would dare to compete with him, when the god, seizing his lyre, drew from it the sweetest melody, accompanying it with soft and harmonious words, which threw the whole assembly into an ecstasy. Every one then exclaimed that Apollo's voice had triumphed over Marsyas' flute, and the poor satyr had the mortification to see the victory of which he had felt so certain, torn from him.

This was not, however, the only punishment which his conceit brought upon him, and we must suppose that vexation had drawn from him some insulting language against the victor, for Apollo, becoming irritated, had the barbarity to tie him to a tree, and have him flayed alive. This unhappy sufferer's lamentations touched the gods, who changed him into a river, whose first waves were formed by his blood and his tears.

On another occasion of the same kind, however, Apollo showed more generosity towards his opponents, or rather the judges who had condemned him. Midas, king of Phrygia, chosen as arbiter in a competition of the same sort, had the folly to award the prize to some musicians whose talent was not to be compared to that possessed by the god of light. Apollo appeared to submit to this decree with a good grace, and abandoned the crown to his rivals; but some time after, Midas's barber perceived that this prince's ears were becoming of an extraordinary length, and that by degrees they assumed the form of ass's ears. The barber imparted this vexatious discovery to the king himself, who imposed silence upon him under the most severe penalties, and at the same time had a wig or



cap made for himself, which entirely concealed his long ears.

Now I must tell you, there are some people who find it impossible to keep a secret, and cannot forbear publishing all that they know. The barber was of this number; and the poor man, divided between the promise he had made his master, and his love of talking, entirely lost his sleep and appetite. At length, unable to hold out any longer, and afraid of suffocating if he continued silent, he fled into the fields, where he made a hole in the ground, and lying flat on his stomach, he said in a loud voice, "KING MIDAS HAS ASS'S EARS," after which he went off satisfied, and relieved of a great burden.

But the year after, as this barber was passing by the same spot, he perceived with dismay that some reeds which had sprung up in the hole which he had dug, murmured distinctly, when they were agitated by the lightest breeze, KING MIDAS HAS ASS'S EARS. Soon, throughout the country, everybody was anxious to witness this prodigy, and the poor prince's secret was published abroad. It is thus that babblers cannot prevent themselves from divulging whatever is confided to them, notwithstanding all their promises. For my part, I think that next to liars and inquisitive people, none are more to be feared than the indiscreet.

Indiscretion, my little friends, is only too often a defect belonging to your age; but well trained children may easily cure themselves of it, and I am sure it would suffice to point it out to you, to prevent your giving way to it.

The most famous of Apollo's temples was that of Delphi, where lived the famous Pythia, of whom I have spoken to you in the Grecian History. This priestess,

when she ascended the tripod in order to give forth her oracles, wore a crown of laurel; and the avenues to the temple were bordered by trees of the same plant, in memory of the metamorphosis of Daphne.

Apollo, who was sometimes worshipped as the god of light, sometimes as the god of poetry and the fine arts, occasionally bears the surname of Phœbus, and in like manner that of Phœbe is given to his sister Diana. This god was represented under many different forms, but most generally he appears under the figure of a beautiful youth, crowned with laurels and holding a lyre: sometimes also he is seen seated in a car drawn by four mettlesome horses, his forehead surrounded by luminous rays. The most celebrated of the statues of this god is known by the name of the Apollo Belvedere, because it was placed in a palace of that name at Rome. (See Plate X. fig. 19.)

You may have remarked at Paris, if you have ever visited that city, in several of the public gardens, copies of this beautiful statue, which is even at the present day one of the most admirable master-pieces the art of sculpture has produced.

#### QUESTIONS FOR EXAMINATION.

How was Memory personified?

Who were the Muses? and how many of them were there?

How was Apollo related to them? and where did they live?

Mention their names, and over what each presided?

How is Clio represented?

How is Melpomene represented?

How is Thalia represented?

How is Euterpe represented?

How is Urania represented?

What purpose had the Greeks in forming this collection of nymphs?

How were the Muses transported to the concert?

Who was Marsyas? and how did he obtain his flute?

What was the result of the musical contest between Marsyas and Apollo?

What is related of king Midas and his barber?

Which was the most famous of Apollo's temples?

What surnames are given to Apollo and Diana?

How is Apollo generally represented?

How is Apollo's most celebrated statue called?

---

#### BACCHUS AND SILENUS.

Cadmus, the famous Phœnician adventurer, who, having become king of Thebes, introduced among the Pelasgians the knowledge of the letters of the alphabet, had a daughter called Semele, who was so very beautiful, that Jupiter having seen her, resolved to ask her in marriage, without, however, telling her that he was king of heaven and earth. Juno, always on the watch to discover what her husband was about on earth, soon learned the god's projects; and, in order to avenge herself, she assumed the figure of Semele's old nurse, whose name was Beroe, and presented herself before this princess, leaning upon a staff, as if bent by age.

"Is it really true, my dear child," said the perfidious cheat, "that your father wishes to marry you to this stranger, who passes himself off for a prince? For my part, I am very sure that man is not what he appears to be; and I advise you to require him to show himself to you in all his glory, which can be no difficulty to him, if, as he says,

he is nothing less than one of the most powerful kings of the world."

Having uttered these words, the pretended Beroe quitted the princess, embracing her tenderly, and returned to Olympus, very well convinced that she would soon be avenged of her rival.

And in fact, my little friends, from that moment, Semele had no rest until she prevailed upon Jupiter to consent to show himself to her in all his splendor. The god did not yield without great reluctance; but the young lady was so urgent, that at length he did appear before her, surrounded with thunder and lightning. Alas! the poor princess was sorely punished for her curiosity; for the flames with which Jupiter was surrounded, set the palace on fire, and Semele herself perished in the conflagration. All that Jupiter could do, was to save a little boy of hers, and inclose him in his thigh until he attained some growth. This little boy received the name of Bacchus, and became in the sequel one of the most celebrated gods of antiquity.

As soon as Bacchus was brought out to the light, Mercury, by Jupiter's direction, carried him to some good nymphs, who tended him with the greatest care; and the young god, to reward them, changed them, as soon as he no longer needed their nursing, into stars, and placed them in the sky, where they are known by the name of the Hyades. As soon as the child was old enough to study, Jupiter, in order that his education might not be deficient in any respect, gave him the Muses themselves as his teachers, who exerted themselves to instruct him in all that they knew; and, in a short time, the young Bacchus became the best poet, the most learned astronomer, the most



accomplished musician, and the most graceful dancer that has ever appeared in the world. It was indeed wonderful, the progress that the god made under such teachers; and Silenus, his aged preceptor, whom Jupiter had placed about him, to make him attend to his studies, was constantly complimented on his pupil's progress.

With regard to Silenus, my children, I must tell you that this preceptor of Bacchus was rather a singular-looking figure. His bald forehead was surmounted by two small goat's horns; his nose was red and turned up, and he was so enormously corpulent, that his short legs often failed under him; but, in spite of this ridiculous exterior, Silenus was the best man in the world. His pupil was extremely fond of him, and would never give him up.

Bacchus having grown to manhood, suddenly took a great fancy to travel, and set out with an army of men and women, crowned with green leaves, and carrying drums, cymbals, and musical instruments of all kinds; as to lances and swords, this troop did not need them, for Bacchus had no warlike intentions against any one.

The good Silenus, who would have been too old to make a long journey on foot, was mounted on an ass, the most peaceful that could be found; and, notwithstanding his corpulence, he never lagged behind the party, although he was always ready to stop in the taverns on the roadside; for I must allow that Silenus, as he advanced in age, had become rather intemperate. It was doubtless by his advice that Bacchus spread everywhere, as he passed along, the cultivation of the vine; on which account he was worshipped throughout Asia as the god of wine, although he abhorred drunkenness, a vice which degrades man, and puts him on a level with the beasts.



Speaking of this subject, I remember that among the Lacedemonians, in that school of Lycurgus in which the youth were trained up to become strong and courageous citizens, it was the custom, occasionally, to exhibit some wretched slave, whom they had purposely intoxicated, in order to show to what a brutish condition intoxication can reduce a man. In this way, the Spartans imbibed a horror of wine, which they considered as the most dangerous of poisons, because it destroys the reason of those who make too free a use of it.

Although Bacchus himself was too wise to yield to this disgusting passion, he could not restrain his whole army from indulging in it, and then all the men and women became absolutely mad.

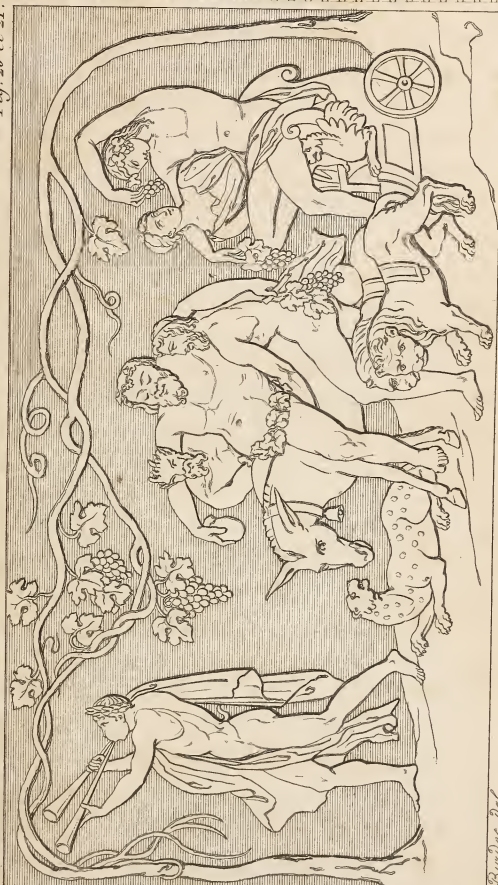
The Bacchantes (a sort of priestess), who formed his train, were dressed in the skins of the tiger and panther, to indicate, doubtless, that intoxication assimilates men to wild beasts; and thus they roamed over the mountains, uttering loud howls, their hair flying wildly about, and armed with a torch or *thyrsus*, that is, a staff entwined with leaves of the vine, and ivy, a sort of creeping plant which clings to the branches of the vine. In this wild guise, they executed a thousand grotesque dances around the god, who was seated in a chariot drawn by panthers or elephants, and followed by old Silenus, drunk and staggering on his ass, his forehead crowned with ivy. (See Pl. XI. fig. 20.)

It was with this wild retinue, which resembled a real Shrove-tide masquerade, that Bacchus is said to have made a conquest of India; thence, retracing his steps across Asia, he visited Egypt, where he also introduced the culture of the vine. Wherever he appeared, the people raised altars

Pl. II.

MYTHOLOGIE DES GRECS ET DES LATINS.

Fig. 20 et 21.



Quodet del.

BACCHUS ET SILENE.

Pl. II. Fig. 20 et 21.



to him, and proclaimed him the benefactor of mankind.

Do you not remark here, my little friends, a striking resemblance between these fabulous journeys of Bacchus, and those that the Hindoos attributed to Vishnu, under the figure of Crishna, and the Egyptians to their god Osiris? All three of them undertook journeys, followed by a numerous but unarmed troop; they were alike worshipped for having taught the useful arts to mankind; and we must believe that the fable of Bacchus is identical with that regarding the Crishna of India and the Osiris of Egypt, who were thus transformed by the Greeks into a divinity of their own country.

Others have considered Bacchus, while on his travels, to be an image of the sun, who, appearing first in the East, where India is situated, then rises above the horizon, and gradually illuminates the whole universe with his rays. Although it is very difficult to explain these mythological fables, there are, at the present day, some laboriously learned men, who are striving to discover the key to them; and perhaps a time will come when those not more advanced in their studies than you now are, may be able to understand what truths were concealed under these ingenious fictions.

The feasts of Bacchus, called Bacchanalia, were a sort of representation of the wild frenzy in which the Bacchantes indulged during this god's journeys. Every one in the Greek towns was obliged to join in them; and it is said that the daughters of Minyas, king of Thebes, having refused to take a part in them, because of the revolting spectacle exhibited by the intoxicated populace on these occasions, the god, irritated by the contempt thus shown



for his worship, changed them into bats, while they were busily working at a magnificent piece of tapestry. This is the reason, say the Greeks, that this hideous bird, who is only seen by night, hangs around the caves where it conceals itself, webs somewhat resembling the tapestry work in which the Mineides excelled.

The same king Midas, to whom, as you know, Apollo had made a present of such a beautiful pair of ass's ears, was not, it would seem, disgusted by this mishap, with having to do with the gods. Bacchus, having been received by him in the course of his journeys with courteous hospitality, offered, on taking his leave, to grant the king whatever he should ask of him.

The stupid Midas, imagining there could be nothing in the world preferable to wealth, chose the power of turning into gold whatever he should touch. This rash wish was granted, but the unfortunate prince soon repented of it, for from that moment everything that his hands touched, became metal, and, surrounded by heaps of gold, he was dying of hunger, because gold is not an eatable.

And now Midas found that, surrounded by wealth, he was about to perish of want. Having therefore besought the gods to relieve him of the fatal gift, which he had so ardently desired, they directed him to bathe in the Pactolus, a river in Phrygia, where he at length lost the power which had threatened him with instant death; but from that time the Pactolus cast up with its sand, grains of gold, which are still occasionally found in it.

This new fable regarding Midas, already famous for his adventure with Apollo, is a lesson for misers, who would willingly suffer themselves to die of hunger, rather than diminish their treasures; it is a just punishment for this



shameful vice, which makes them forget that money is only of value when we know how to make a good use of it.

Bacchus was generally represented under the figure of a smiling, beardless youth, sometimes seated on a bull, and then he very much resembled the Mithras of the Persians, whom we have already been introduced to; but most commonly he was seen seated in a chariot drawn by wild beasts, apparently to intimate that wine, which renders men ferocious, had the power to tame savage animals. He held in one hand either a bunch of grapes or a cup, and in the other a thyrsus. The magpie was sacrificed to him, because drunkenness renders men talkative, and a goat, which animal destroys the blossoms of the vine. Ivy and vine-leaves, both of which were consecrated to him, were supposed to dissipate the fumes of wine.

#### QUESTIONS FOR EXAMINATION.

Who was Semele?

How did Juno deceive her?

What was the consequence of Semele's request being granted?

How did Bacchus reward his nurses?

Who were intrusted with his education?

Who was Silenus? Describe his appearance?

With what retinue did Bacchus set out on his travels?

Describe the Bacchantes?

What conquest did Bacchus achieve? and in what way did he benefit mankind?

Trace the resemblance between Bacchus and the Egyptian and Hindoo gods.

In what light have Bacchus's journeys been considered?

What were the Bacchanalia?

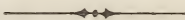
What is related of the Mineides?

How did Midas show himself worthy of his ass's ears?

How was he relieved of his fatal gift?

How was Bacchus generally represented? and what other god does he then resemble?

What sacrifice was offered to him?



#### THE JUDGMENT OF PARIS.

The universe had not yet existed quite a whole year, my little friends, when the first day of the first spring arrived. The sky was pure and cloudless; the earth, covered with verdure, was beginning to shoot forth a few flowers; the sun rose with radiant light over the whole horizon; thousands of birds were warbling in melodious concert, and the sea presented the appearance of a smooth glass, when all at once, from the midst of its calm bosom, a white and foamy wave came dashing up against the shore, where it deposited on a bed of moss——You would never guess what was brought up by this wave: well, it was a young girl, more beautiful than all the nymphs of heaven, earth, or sea; in a word, it was Venus, whom Jupiter, as soon as he saw her, instantly declared to be the goddess of beauty.

This news, which was at once spread through Olympus, by Renown—a very indiscreet goddess, represented with a trumpet at her mouth, and borne along on rapid wings,—set all the divinities of the celestial empire in a stir.

The proud Juno bestowed more care than usual on her toilet; the wise Minerva could not help firing at the idea of a rival; and all the other goddesses consulted their mirrors more than twenty times on that day, to ascertain

whether their head-dresses were not in disorder. But Jupiter, not willing that the new divinity should appear before the assembled court of the gods without having first received an education becoming a well-bred young person, confided the care of Venus's education to twelve sisters, called the Hours, who presided over the twelve hours of the day. Those diligent teachers made such good use of their time, and their lessons were so useful, that in a few days the young goddess became, under their training, a real piece of perfection ; and Jupiter, satisfied with their diligence, ordered that their pupil should appear without further delay at Olympus, where Hebe should pour out to her the nectar of immortality. That day, my little friends, was quite a holiday at the court of the gods. I even believe there was a concert on the occasion (Apollo and Euterpe being the musicians), followed by a little ballet, at which Terpsichore skipped about as lightly as any bird.

However, by the next day, Jupiter was obliged to think about marrying his new daughter, for all those gods who were not yet provided with wives had come forward as candidates for her favor ; and each was making the most of his advantages in order to secure a preference.

Apollo modestly represented that he was the most amiable and accomplished of all the gods ; he reminded Jupiter that he understood music, rhetoric, astronomy, a little medicine, and many other things besides. Bacchus—that fat, fine-looking youth—tried to persuade Jupiter that Venus's hand was his due, because of the services which he had rendered the world by propagating the culture of the vine. Mars, spite of his sunburnt face and rough manners, pretended that the goddess of beauty ought to

belong to the god of war, as the just recompense of his exploits: even Mercury, if he had not been so very busy, would have claimed the preference for himself, on account of his punctuality in executing the many commissions he was intrusted with. But Jupiter, in order to keep the peace among them, made another choice, which no one could have expected; for he decided that the young goddess should become the wife of the lame Vulcan, as a reward for his toil in manufacturing thunderbolts. Upon which this god came limping up, and having married Venus before all Olympus assembled, he carried her off to his dark subterranean palace, where the beautiful bride soon became discontented, because of her white skin's being spoiled by the smoke from Vulcan's forges. She then returned to Olympus, with the consent of the master of the gods; and it is said that she obtained Jupiter's permission to go down but seldom to her husband's abode, as he was, moreover, by no means a very agreeable person.

Some time after this, my children, there was a celebrated wedding, to which all the gods of heaven, of earth, of sea, and even of the infernal regions, were invited. It was the wedding of a young and amiable prince, called Peleus, with a beautiful nymph called Thetis, whom we must not confound with the sea-goddess Tethys, in whose abode the sun went to rest every evening.

Discord, a hideous divinity, whose head bristled with serpents, was the only one excluded from this feast, because it would have been disturbed by her presence; but this wicked goddess avenged herself in a cruel manner, for just when the festivity ~~was~~ at its height, when Bacchus was pressing the guests to taste of the best wine from his cellar, Discord, springing from under the table, where she



had hidden herself, threw into the midst of the assembly an apple, on which were written these words, "TO THE MOST BEAUTIFUL," certain that this apple would become the cause of a quarrel which would not fail to occasion some trouble.

And, in truth, as soon as the goddesses had read this inscription, they all pressed forward to claim the prize of beauty; but although there was scarcely one in the whole assembly who could not advance some pretension, it was unanimously decided that only Juno, Minerva, and Venus should be admitted as candidates. It now only remained to find a judge sufficiently impartial to choose between the three candidates, whom all the gods would have been afraid of displeasing, when Mercury, who had but just returned from visiting the four corners of the earth, persuaded the goddesses to refer the matter to a young shepherd called Paris, who was son of Priam, king of Troy. This advice was followed, and a simple shepherd was chosen arbiter in a dispute which concerned so many divinities.

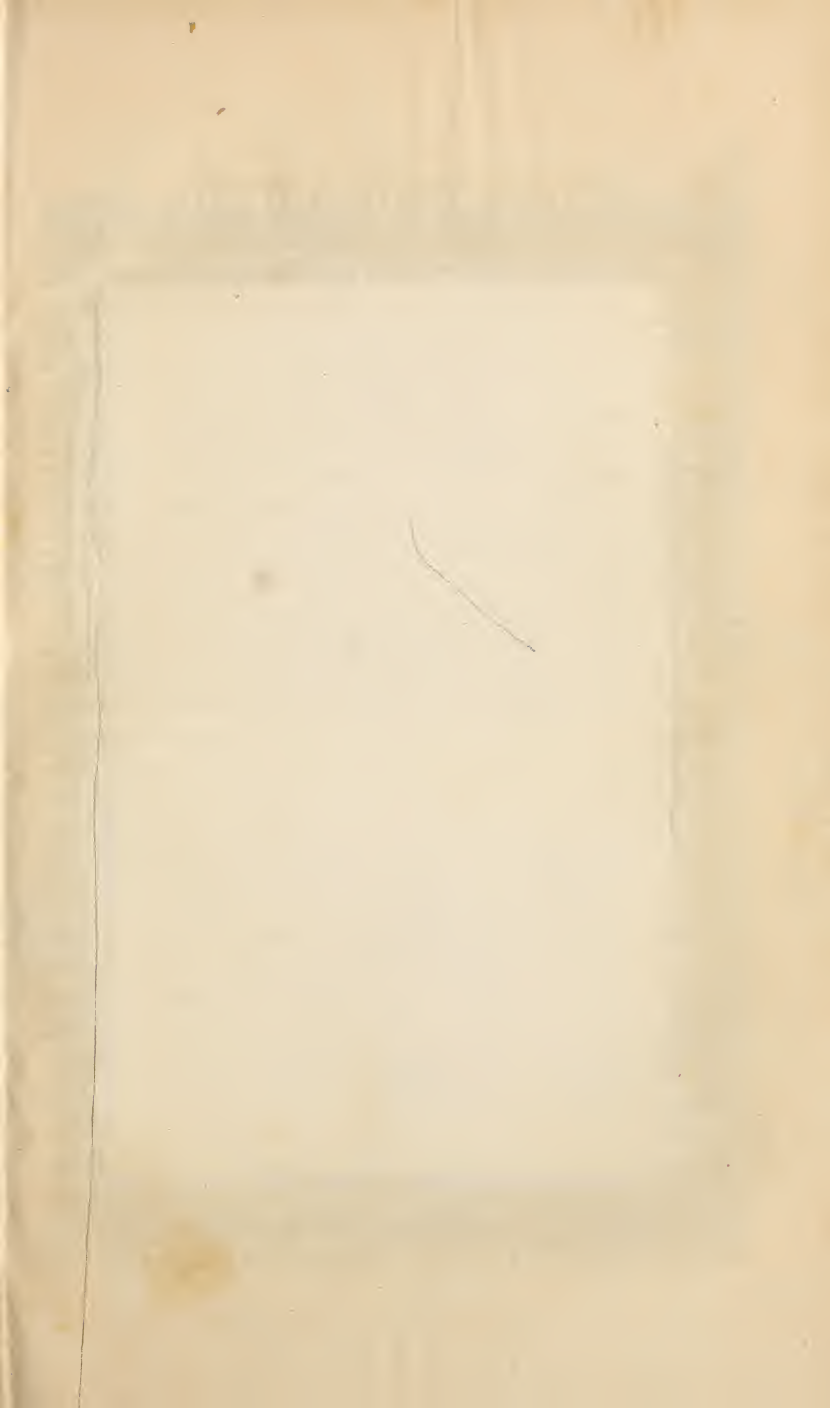
First, Juno came forward, arrayed in all her magnificence, and glittering with gold and jewels. The shepherd, dazzled by her majestic air, was about to adjudge the apple to her, when Minerva presented herself, with all the gravity of wisdom tempered by a sweet and benevolent smile: the goddess was armed from head to foot, but she had taken care to conceal her ægis, for fear of alarming the judge. The latter felt so much embarrassed at having to choose between the two rivals, who were equally beautiful, that he was very much tempted to divide the apple between them, when Venus, with no other ornament than a garland of roses, and a magic girdle which Jupiter had presented to her, modestly advanced, and struck Paris



with such extreme admiration, that, immediately falling at her feet, he declared that Juno had appeared to him too proud, and Minerva too grave, while to Venus alone belonged the prize of beauty.

This celebrated decision was received in Olympus with unanimous applause; Juno and Minerva withdrew in anger; and Venus ascending in triumph a little car made of a single shell of mother-of-pearl, and drawn by two pretty doves, rose into the air. This magic girdle which Jupiter had given Venus, and which had secured the prize to her, was nothing else, my children, but the emblem of modesty, grace, and gentleness, without which beauty is but a trifling advantage. Above all, remember that a beautiful exterior is a valuable gift only when it is accompanied by a good heart and an amiable character; otherwise, it is more hurtful than useful, because it renders defects more conspicuous, inasmuch as it leads us to expect good qualities in its possessor. The ancients asserted that the choice made by Paris had been the cause of Troy's destruction, which you have seen an account of in the history of Greece; and that it was in order to avenge themselves upon this shepherd, who afterwards had become a prince, that Juno and Minerva stirred up all Greece against this celebrated town. The valiant Achilles who is mentioned in the same history, was the son of Thetis and Peleus, the same whose nuptials had been disturbed by the apple of discord.

The beautiful Venus had several children, some of whom were extremely celebrated. Cupid, or Love, was considered one of them; he was represented as a winged child, with a bandage over his eyes, and armed with a bow and several small arrows; Hymen, the divinity who presided





*Baudet de.*

*Fig. 22.*



*Les Grâces.*

*Fig. 23.*

over marriage; and the three Graces, Aglaia, Thalia, and Euphrosyne, who were their mother's inseparable companions. (See Plate XII. fig. 23.)

Venus was most commonly represented under the figure of a beautiful woman, standing or seated in a car drawn by two doves or two sparrows, which bird was consecrated to her. The most celebrated of her temples were those of Gnidus, of Paphos, and of Idalium, where her altars were set up in thickets of myrtle and rose trees. The surname of Cypris, or Cytherea, is sometimes given to her, because of her being especially honored in those Greek islands.

The Venus de' Medicis is the most celebrated statue of this goddess bequeathed to us by antiquity; it was long one of the ornaments of a palace belonging to a powerful family of this name, who formerly reigned at Florence in Italy, and of whom I shall doubtless have occasion to speak to you in other books. (See Plate XII. fig. 22.)

#### QUESTIONS FOR EXAMINATION.

Relate the manner of Venus's first appearance.

How is Renown represented?

How did the news of Venus's arrival affect the other goddesses?

How was Venus educated?

Who were the several candidates for her hand?

On whom did Jupiter bestow Venus in marriage?

How was Venus pleased with her husband and his abode?

To whose wedding were all the divinities invited?

How did Discord disturb the assembled company?

To whose judgment was the decision referred?

On whom was the apple bestowed?

What was this judgment supposed by the ancients to have been the remote cause of?

Who was the son of Peleus and Thetis?

Who were Venus's children?



How was Venus generally represented?

What surname was given her? and why?

Which was the most celebrated statue of this goddess?

---

#### THE LABORS OF HERCULES.

Look, my little friends, at that robust man, whose shoulders are covered with a lion's skin, while his hand rests upon a massy club. That is Hercules, another of Jupiter's sons; he is the god of strength and courage. (See Plate XIII. fig. 24.)

The history of this god is full of wonderful incidents, and his whole life was a continued succession of marvellous labors and glorious efforts. Immediately after his birth, Juno, who hated his mother Alcmena, went to beseech Destiny to render his existence as rough and perilous as possible.

Now you must know, my little friends, that Destiny was a blind and inflexible divinity, whose will the gods themselves had not power to alter. His stern countenance was never relaxed, and when he had once written a man's destiny in his eternal book, Jupiter himself was not able to efface his decrees. He was represented under the figure of an austere old man, his forehead surrounded with stars, one foot on the terrestrial globe, and in his hand the urn which inclosed the fate of mortals.

It was to this formidable god that Juno applied to learn the destiny of Hercules; but she could not prevent a glorious career being opened before him, while the decree

stood firm that he should triumph over the many dangers he should have to encounter. All that the goddess could effect was to induce Destiny to subject Hercules to the control of Eurystheus, king of Thebes, his elder brother, a harsh and cruel prince, whose power he should not be able to escape. Juno's hatred was but half satisfied, but she did not relax her efforts.

Indeed, Hercules was still an infant, when the goddess sent two enormous serpents, who, gliding into his cradle, were about to strangle him, but the god seizing them with his little hands crushed them both. It was easy to foresee from this feat what such a child might one day become, whose prodigious strength did but increase with his growth.

When Hercules had reached manhood, his brother Eurystheus, in order to try his courage, intrusted him with the care of his flocks, in a country where an enormous lion had long made a dreadful carnage among the sheep, and had even destroyed all the men that came near him. This formidable animal's retreat was a neighboring wood, called the forest of Nemea. The young shepherd did not wait for the monster to attack his flock ; providing himself with a heavy iron club, and some arrows, he went in pursuit of him. But having approached the lion, it was in vain that he sent his arrows after him, and even struck him with his club ; this terrible animal's skin proved so entirely impenetrable that the hero, in spite of all his efforts, could not succeed in striking him down ; whereupon, as his courage was not inferior to his strength, he seized the monster in his powerful arms, and pressed him there so tightly that he stifled him.

This first triumph of the young Hercules, my little friends, procured for him a glorious trophy, for having

immediately stripped the animal he had just destroyed, he covered himself with this remarkable skin, which served him as a garment, or rather a cuirass, ever after in all the labors in which he engaged. Eurystheus, informed of this victory, then perceived that such a valiant man was not one to pass his life in tending flocks ; but as he could not help fearing him, he obliged him to make war upon all the monsters who were devastating the earth, forbidding him to reappear at his court until he should have accomplished twelve labors, which he, Eurystheus, would appoint him ; upon which the young hero set forth, already impatient to display his courage and strength in other combats.

There was at that time in Greece, my children, a monstrous serpent, called the Lernean Hydra, because it generally harbored in a marsh of that name, the whole neighborhood of which it ravaged. This reptile had seven heads, and whenever one was cut off, there sprang up seven new ones. It was by the defeat of this monster that Hercules wished to begin his labors ; but although he attacked him, he could not succeed in destroying him until he set fire to the reeds which served him as a hiding-place. This serpent's blood was so subtle a poison, that the hero having dipped the points of his arrows into it, all the wounds inflicted by them were rendered incurable. We shall see hereafter, how this property of these terrible arrows became fatal to Hercules himself.

Armed with these fatal arrows, his formidable club, and above all, his unconquerable courage, Hercules pursued the labors which were to immortalize him.

First he captured the wild-boar of Mount Erymanthus, a furious animal, who, whenever he descended from his den, devastated all the neighboring countries. Hercules

having caught him, lifted him alive upon his shoulders, and carried him thus to Eurystheus's feet, who was so alarmed at this sight, that he had nearly died of fright. Another time he brought to the same prince a beautiful hind, whose feet were of brass, and her horns of gold, and whom no one had ever been able to approach, so light of foot was she.

The hero had not long rested after these two victories when he heard that on the lake Stymphalus, in the neighborhood of the country he then inhabited, were to be found some terrible birds, whose wings and beaks were of iron, and their claws exceedingly hooked; whoever had the imprudence to approach this lake was immediately torn to pieces by these formidable birds. But Hercules, having startled them by beating with violence on some silver basins, pierced them with his arrows, just as they were endeavoring to fly away. This victory gained the hero great honor throughout all Greece; and Eurystheus, plainly perceiving that nothing would be henceforth impossible to him, sent him to the succor of one of his neighbors called Minos, king of the island of Crete, against whom Neptune had sent a bull, whose nostrils puffed out whirlwinds of flame. Hercules, always invincible, captured this monster also, and brought him alive before his brother, who was now very much embarrassed how to point out new exploits to him.

Some time afterwards, however, Eurystheus, having heard of a marvellous tree in an unknown country, which produced golden apples, conceived an immoderate desire to possess them, and commanded Hercules to seek them all over the earth; warning him, however, that these precious fruits were placed under the guardianship of a dragon



with a hundred heads, who vomited torrents of flame and smoke. Hercules did not well know where to find this wonderful tree, but as by the law of destiny he must obey Eurystheus, he set out, and travelled on until he reached the kingdom of Atlas, king of Africa, who was the father of three beautiful girls, called the Hesperides, to whom, as it happened, belonged the garden containing the golden apples, which were guarded by the dragon with a hundred heads.

Now I must tell you, my children, that King Atlas, having formerly aided the Titans in their wars with the gods, Jupiter, as a punishment, had obliged him to bear up Heaven on his shoulders; which means that in the kingdom of Atlas, there were high mountains, whose tops seemed to touch the sky. Hercules being very desirous of gaining admittance into the garden of the Hesperides, offered Atlas to relieve him from his heavy burden for a certain time, provided he would show him the famous tree with the golden apples; and Atlas having joyfully consented to do so, the hero supported alone, during several days, the whole weight of the celestial arch, after which, in reward for his civility, Atlas opened his daughters' garden to him, when Hercules killed the dragon, and carried off the treasure.

As he was returning to his brother, loaded with this precious booty, a king called Augeas, who possessed a herd of three thousand oxen, having begged him to carry away the dung from his stables, which during thirty years had not been cleansed, the hero, in order to accomplish this task, drove out all the oxen, and turning the course of a neighboring river so as to make it pass through these stables, the waves carried off all the filth.

It was, you will naturally say, a singular occupation for a hero like Hercules to be cleaning out stables; but you should remember that Hercules was obeying a rigorous destiny, which he could not escape, and doubtless Destiny, in imposing this toil upon him, meant to prove whether he would be as submissive as he was courageous. One of Hercules's last labors was, to kill a vulture who was devouring the heart of Prometheus, whose history is also a very curious one. This Prometheus was a very skilful Grecian statuary, who, having completed the statue of a man of surpassing beauty, was seized with a desire to render it animated by stealing from heaven some sparks of Jupiter's sacred fire, in order to impart life and motion to his work; but the god, irritated by this daring attempt, struck Prometheus with his thunderbolt, and commanded Vulcan to tie him with indestructible chains to the summit of Mount Caucasus, where a vulture should gnaw his heart unceasingly. Hercules, having killed this voracious animal, broke Prometheus's chain, and restored him to liberty.

I should never finish, my children, were I to relate to you all the marvellous adventures in which Hercules proved victorious, but I must at least give you an account of a journey which this hero made into hell, in search of one of his friends called Theseus, who had had the impudence to penetrate into this abode, in order to carry off Proserpine from Pluto. This fable is really full of wonders, and moreover it will inform us of many interesting things which the ancients told regarding this dismal place.

#### QUESTIONS FOR EXAMINATION.

Describe Hercules.

How did Juno show her hatred of Alcmena?

Describe Destiny.

How far did Juno prevail with Destiny?

What exploit did Hercules perform in his cradle?

What was his first exploit after reaching manhood?

With what trophy did this furnish him?

How did he overcome the Lernean Hydra?

What was his next labor?

What is said of the birds that he destroyed?

What service did he render Minos?

What service did Eurystheus next require of him?

How did he obey this command?

What exploit did he perform as he was returning to his brother?

What is the story of Prometheus's crime and punishment?

What did Hercules next determine to undertake?

---

#### HERCULES IN HELL.

Theseus and Pirithous were two Athenians, united by the strictest friendship from childhood. They had both passed their youth, like Hercules, in warring against the monsters and tyrants that desolated Greece, and their courage was known throughout the world. But these two imprudent individuals, having conceived the silly idea of going down into hell to carry off Proserpine from her husband, they were sorely punished for their temerity; for Pirithous was devoured by Cerberus, a terrible dog with three heads, who guarded the gates of hell, and Theseus was thrown alive into the most gloomy cell in the domains of the dead, where he soon lost all hope of ever again seeing the light.

Now, Hercules, who was a friend of Theseus, having heard

during his travels of this imprudence, and the consequent punishment, and only heeding the suggestions of his friendship and his unconquerable valor, resolved to rescue Theseus from the eternal punishment reserved for him, and to descend himself into hell, to deliver his friend from Pluto's anger.

Hercules, as you know, was not one to shrink from any danger, still he could not help shuddering on approaching the cavern indicated to him as the nearest way down to Pluto's kingdom. Around this cavern neither flowers nor verdure were to be seen; the earth, dried up by pestilential vapors, lay waste and barren; and if a few miserable shrubs, besides the cypress, appeared at long distances, their stalks were bare of foliage. The very birds avoided these dismal fields, while the flocks fled in horror from these fatal plains, which produced nothing but briars and poisonous thorns. From time to time, whirlwinds of flame and smoke escaped through the opening of the cavern, so that one might have supposed some blacksmith's workshop at hand, except that the most profound silence reigned around. It was through this ominous entrance that the hero penetrated into the kingdom of the dead.

As he was not the first living creature who had visited this sad abode, he had been warned to use certain precautions, in order to propitiate the infernal divinities. Several persons had advised him to offer up a black dog in sacrifice to Hecate, and to provide himself with a cake for Cerberus; but the hero, who had already vanquished so many monsters, would not believe these old women's tales; and when he found himself confronting this terrible animal, who, opening his three mouths at once, uttered a loud triple bark, he undertook to conquer him by main force, threw



him down, and bound him with such strong chains, that the astonished Cerberus began to lick his feet in silence.

This victory achieved, Hercules went on, and soon reached the banks of a black and muddy river called Acheron, which formed the first barrier between the abode of the living and that of the Manes, a name given to the souls of the dead when they descended into Pluto's empire. Some of the nations of antiquity have made especial divinities of them, in order thus to honor the memory of their ancestors; and the worship paid the Manes in the interior of the houses was sometimes confounded with that offered to the Lares, which gods I told you of in the fable of Janus. The Acheron had not always flowed under these gloomy vaults; formerly, its clear and rapid waves had refreshed the earth; but when the Titans undertook to scale the sky, its transparent waters unfortunately slaked their thirst, and Jupiter, in anger, precipitated it into hell, where its thick and stagnant waters were lost in the Styx, the largest of the subterranean rivers, which, it was said, encircled the abode of the dead nine times.

On reaching the banks of the Styx, Hercules was astonished to see hovering around him a multitude of miserable shades, in despair at not being able to obtain permission to cross this river from the old boatman called Charon, whose duty it was to ferry over in his boat all those Manes who paid him a small coin called an *obolus*.

This is the reason that the ancients were in the habit of placing a piece of money in the mouths of the dead, in order that they might pay the price of their passage to the avaricious Charon, who was never disposed to allow any one credit. These inconsolable ghosts who were thus wandering on the banks of the Styx, were those of the dead

who either had been denied burial, or who had not been able to pay the boatman the required obolus.

I beg of you to remark here, my little friends, that the old ferryman never exacted from any one more than an obolus, whether it were a king or a slave who came to his boat; because, in Pluto's kingdom, there was no distinction between men, who are all made equal by death.

The stern Charon frowned on perceiving Hercules, fearing lest the hero's weight should sink his boat, which was made of the bark of a tree, and usually carried none but light ghosts. However, when the son of Jupiter declared his name, Charon relented, and permitted Hercules to take a seat beside him.

While the hero is thus crossing the Styx, to the great astonishment of the Manes, who gathered on the two banks to contemplate the novel spectacle of a living man, I must remind you that this was the very river that the gods shrank from swearing by, while those who violated this oath were severely punished by Jupiter.

As soon as the boat touched the shore, Hercules advanced towards Pluto's gloomy palace, where, not without difficulty, he distinguished the god through the darkness, seated on his ebony throne, beside his dear Proserpine. Pluto did not like to see a living man; the sight of one was as odious to him as the light of day is to the eyes of those animals who only come out at night. His countenance became still paler and more stern than usual at sight of Hercules; but when the latter had made himself known, he obtained Pluto's permission to visit his gloomy dominions, and even prevailed upon him to restore to the guilty Theseus the liberty he had been deprived of.

At the foot of Pluto's throne, Hercules recognised Death.

She was clad in a black robe, sprinkled with stars, and her fleshless hand held a sharp scythe, with which she was supposed to mow down mankind. The hero was glad to leave this funereal palace; and as he did not yet know where to seek his friend Theseus, he determined to visit all the infernal regions, where he saw many people that he had heard spoken of on earth, and with whom it is well that we should make acquaintance also.

After wandering about pretty much at random under these dismal arches, he perceived in a dark hall, three sisters, old, pale, and meagre, who were spinning by the bluish light of a lamp: these were the Fates, infernal divinities, whose duty was said to be that of spinning the life of every mortal who appeared on the earth, were it only for a single instant.

Clotho, the eldest, held a distaff, filled with white and black wool mixed with some strands of gold and silk. This coarse wool, my little friends, typified the life of man, while the gold and silk represented the days of happiness, which are always much fewer in number than the others.

Lachesis, the second of the Fates, was diligently turning a spindle with her left hand, while her right guided a small thread, which it was the duty of the third sister, called Atropos, to cut with a pair of sharp scissors at the moment of each mortal's death. You may judge how busy these three sisters were, since the thread of all our lives must pass through their fingers. Hercules had a great desire to ask them if they would spin much longer for him, but they had not time to answer him, and the hero passed on his way. Some steps further on, his attention was arrested by three venerable old men, who, seated on a tribunal, appeared to be passing judgment on a man

newly arrived in Pluto's kingdom: these were Minos, Eacus, and Rhadamanthus, the three judges of hell, appointed by the god to punish the guilty by throwing them into a gulf called Tartarus, whence they could never escape, and to reward the virtuous by opening to them an entrance into a place of happiness called the Elysian Fields.

These judges could never be mistaken, because Themis, the goddess of Justice, held before them a pair of scales, in which she weighed the actions of all men, and their decrees were immediately executed by an implacable goddess, armed with a bloody scourge, who was called Nemesis, or vengeance. This infernal tribunal should remind you, my children, of the Egyptian custom described in the ancient history; namely, that of passing judgment upon the memory of every man, immediately after his death, before granting him funeral honors. It was doubtless from this wise institution that the Greeks had taken the idea of the infernal judges, who secured to the good an eternal reward, and to the wicked a punishment without end.

#### QUESTIONS FOR EXAMINATION.

Who were Theseus and Pirithous?

What bold enterprise did they undertake?

Describe the appearance of the region around the entrance to Pluto's empire.

How did Hercules overcome Cerberus?

What river did Hercules first reach?

What is meant by the Manes?

How had the Acheron become a river of hell?

Who did he meet on the banks of the Styx? and how did he cross the river?

What reception did Pluto give him?



Who did Hercules see at the foot of Pluto's throne?

Describe the Fates.

Who were Minos, Eacus, and Rhadamanthus?

What should this tribunal remind us of?



#### TARTARUS AND THE ELYSIAN FIELDS.

Immediately on quitting the tribunal of the three judges, Hercules saw opening before him an immense gulf, whence arose whirlwinds of black and thick smoke. This smoke covered a river of fire called Phlegethon, whose burning waves made a terrible noise; not far from thence flowed also the Cocytus, another inexhaustible river, formed by the tears of the hapless wretches shut up in Tartarus; for it was, in fact, this abode of eternal torment which he had just entered.

The sovereigns of these dismal abodes were the Furies, who with bristling hair, and armed with scourges, pitilessly tormented the criminals by incessantly presenting them with the picture of their crimes.

Here were driven, and for ever, the Manes of the treacherous, the ungrateful, the perjured; unnatural children, murderers, hypocrites who had pretended to be good and honest in order to deceive. But these miserable beings were not the only inhabitants of Tartarus; there were also to be seen the great villains who had startled the world by some especially frightful crime; for each of these Pluto, aided by the Furies, had invented some extraordinary punishment, one or two of which it is worth while to describe.

Among these wicked wretches, so justly overtaken by divine vengeance, Hercules recognised a Grecian king called Salmoneus, whom he had formerly met upon earth. This madman, whose pride had destroyed his reason, fancied himself a god, and on an equality with the master of thunder. In order to imitate the distant rumbling of thunder, he had himself drawn during the night in a car over a brazen bridge, from whence he threw blazing torches upon unhappy slaves collected under this bridge, whom his guards knocked down, in order thus to imitate the effects of lightning.

Jupiter, indignant both at his pride and his cruelty, struck him with real lightning, and thrust him down into Tartarus, where he was condemned to be burnt eternally with a fire which devoured without consuming him.

Sisyphus, brother of Salmoneus, was not a much more worthy person; he was a famous robber of Attica, who decoyed travellers into his den, where he destroyed them in frightful tortures. The same Theseus, whom Hercules had come to rescue from hell, having encountered him, killed him in fight, and Jupiter obliged this miserable wretch, as his punishment in Tartarus, to make ceaseless efforts to roll an enormous stone up to the summit of a high mountain. It was only after long and incredible efforts that he succeeded in approaching the summit, which he always fancied himself just about to reach, when, at the very moment that panting for breath, and exhausted by fatigue, he saw the block, as he believed, about to steady itself, suddenly the rock shook, and rolling to the foot of the mountain, obliged him, without even an interval of repose, to recommence his toil.

This fable of the robber Sisyphus, my good friends,

exactly pictures all those who are so unfortunate as to be ambitious, or envious of the merit of others. They consume their lives in continual struggle, and when they think themselves about to attain the end proposed, the stone falls, and they are constrained to new efforts. I do not believe that there is among you one of these unfortunate characters, for you cannot but of yourselves understand the difference between a laudable emulation to deserve the approbation of your teachers and comrades, and the mean jealousy which cannot without anger endure to be surpassed by others. Besides, toil and application are never without their advantage, and to know their value is to profit by them.

At some distance from the robber Sisyphus, Hercules perceived Tantalus, who, incessantly devoured by raging hunger, and consumed by insatiable thirst, was for ever plunged in a liquid stream, which shrank back from his lips as soon as he endeavored to slake his thirst with it, while branches laden with the ripest and most exquisite fruit, bent towards him, so as to be within his reach ; but no sooner did he stretch out his arms to seize them, than the branch receded, when the unfortunate Tantalus gave himself up to despair as inextinguishable as the hunger and the thirst which devoured him.

This cruel king had, indeed, well deserved this punishment. One day, the gods having made a journey on the earth, asked his hospitality. He pretended to receive them with great pleasure ; but, in order to prove their divinity, of which he was doubtful, he ordered his cook to serve up to them, in a ragout, the limbs of his own son, Pelops, a good and amiable young prince. The guests divined the nature of this execrable dish, and refused to

partake of the feast, with the exception, however, of Ceres, who, doubtless inadvertently, ate one of poor Pelops's shoulders. Jupiter was so indignant at the barbarity of this unnatural father, that he struck him with thunder and precipitated him into hell, where he was condemned to the frightful punishment I have just described. As to the young Pelops, the gods, touched with pity, restored him to life; but being unable to give him back his shoulder, which Ceres had eaten, they gave him one of ivory instead, which did not entirely compensate him for that which he had lost.

Hercules was preparing to quit these sad abodes, where he had vainly sought his friend Theseus, when his attention was attracted by the groans of a crowd of women with dishevelled hair, who were condemned incessantly to pour water into a tub without a bottom. He recognised in them the Danaides, that is, the daughters of a king of Argos, called Danaus, whom he had heard often spoken of in his youth.

The Danaides were a family of fifty sisters, and their father, having been warned by an oracle that one of his sons-in-law would kill him, in order to rule in his stead, persuaded them to slaughter their fifty husbands all in one night, with little poniards, which he had secretly furnished them with on the day of their marriage. This horrible plot was carried into execution by these cruel women, with the exception of but one, called Hypermnestra, who had the courage to disobey her father, spite of his threats, and to save the life of her husband, Lynceus, with whom she fled.

Shortly after this, the oracle that had so alarmed Danaus was fulfilled, for Lynceus, having declared war against this



perfidious king, killed him in battle. Jupiter, in punishment of the crime perpetrated by Hypermnestra's forty-nine sisters, precipitated them into Tartarus, where their punishment consisted in making unceasing efforts to fill a bottomless tub. As to the princess Hypermnestra, the inhabitants of Argos, in honor of her conjugal piety, instituted a solemn feast, which was called "THE FEAST OF TORCHES," because she had made use of a torch to rescue her husband from the dreadful fate which awaited him.

Hercules, having at last quitted this abode of misery, perceived before him a peaceful river, which separated Tartarus from the Elysian fields, that is to say, the place of punishment from the place of eternal rewards. The river was called Lethe.

The waters of Lethe, which the hero crossed without difficulty, possessed a singular property: they deprived all those who drank of them of memory, which signifies that virtuous men, on entering the Elysian fields, forget all the miseries of human life.

A perpetual verdure, odoriferous groves, meadows enamelled with flowers, and all this irradiated by a light as soft as it was brilliant, formed this abode of delight, where only those who had been good and virtuous on earth were admitted after death. Never were those lovely abodes darkened by the presence of night, and virtuous souls there tasted pure and unalloyed felicity.

Hercules recognised in these divine retreats a crowd of kings, of heroes, and of simple mortals, who had formerly rendered great services to their fellow-creatures. He there perceived Cecrops the Egyptian, the founder of Athens, who had instructed the Greeks in the culture of the earth; Erichthon, who had first invented the use of coin, to faci-

litate commerce among the people of Greece ; Triptolemus, who had been taught the use of the plough by Ceres herself ; Codrus, the ancient king of Athens, who, having been informed by an oracle during the war in which he was involved, that the nation whose king should perish in battle would prove triumphant, had disguised himself as a simple soldier, and thus exposed himself to the first assault of the enemy, in order to secure the victory to his people ; and, finally, another prince, who, during the prevalence of a frightful plague, had besought the gods to strike himself only, and to spare his subjects. This prayer was granted, but Jupiter placed him in the Elysian fields in reward for his humanity.

We must not suppose, however, my children, that this place was reserved for kings and heroes only ; thither also descended, without distinction, the souls of all those who had been good and virtuous upon earth, whatever condition they had been born in. I believe I have elsewhere already told you, that all mortals were made equal in Pluto's kingdom ; nay, it often happened that the patient slave was received into the Elysian fields, while his proud and cruel master was thrown into the depths of Tartarus, where the flames of Phlegethon devoured him.

Hercules having at last found Theseus in one of the remote corners of hell, left Elysium with him, through an ivory door, the key of which Pluto had confided to him ; and both, with pleasure, found themselves again upon earth, where they recounted the strange sights they had witnessed during their sojourn among the dead.

## QUESTIONS FOR EXAMINATION.

Describe the rivers Phlegethon and Cocytus.

Who were the sovereigns of this abode? and what was their office?

Who were thrown into Tartarus?

Relate Salmoneus's crime and its punishment?

Describe the character of Sisyphus, and the punishment inflicted upon him.

What does it exemplify?

Describe the sufferings of Tantalus.

What crime had he committed?

How did the gods compensate Pelops for the loss of his shoulder?

Who were the Danaides? and what crime had they committed?

How did Hypermnestra act? and what festivities were celebrated in honor of her?

What river separated Tartarus from the Elysian fields?

What property distinguished this river?

Describe the Elysian fields.

Who did Hercules meet in these abodes of happiness?

Were they reserved for kings and heroes?

Where did Hercules find Theseus? and how did they leave hell?

---

THE TUNIC OF THE CENTAUR NESSUS.

The mountains of Thessaly, a Grecian province, which I have mentioned to you in relating the fable of Apollo and Daphne, were inhabited by a strange nation of monsters, having the head and arms of a man, and the body of a horse. They were called Centaurs, and several of these monsters have been very celebrated: one of them, called Chiron, had been Hercules's preceptor, and had instructed him in the art of medicine. Others of them excelled in several different arts; but as they grew wicked

and proud, Hercules and Theseus shot such a number of them, that soon but a few of these fabulous beings remained. (Plate XIII. fig. 25.)

One day Hercules having resolved to marry, made choice of a young princess called Dejanira, who was the daughter of a powerful neighboring king. After the marriage ceremony, he set out with his bride, and travelled until he reached the bank of a river, which he was at a loss how to get her over, when all at once a Centaur, by name Nessus, presented himself, and offered to take Dejanira on his back, and carry her over to the other side of the river. But, scarcely had the monster lifted his precious burden, when setting off at a full gallop, he attempted to carry away Dejanira, and transport her to the country of the Centaurs. Hercules, perceiving this perfidious design, sent one of his terrible arrows after the traitor Nessus, which pierced him through and through. The Centaur expired almost immediately, but not before he had time to offer Dejanira the tunic which he wore, and which was steeped in his blood, assuring her, that if ever Hercules should wish to take another wife, this tunic would prevent him. The credulous Dejanira accepted this fatal present, and you will see what was the result.

Some time after, as if Nessus had been able to foresee the future, Hercules became desirous to marry another princess called Iola, who was not less beautiful than Dejanira; and the latter, secretly informed of this design, became so terribly jealous, that she determined to make use of the fatal gift of Nessus.

I believe I had occasion in other books to observe to you what a dreadful defect jealousy is, which passion can in a moment corrupt the best nature, and Dejanira was



very much to blame for giving way to it ; but she was far from suspecting the misfortune she was about to occasion, for she loved Hercules, and would rather a hundred times have died herself than have injured him in the smallest degree.

Now, you remember, doubtless, that Hercules's arrows had been dipped in the blood of the Lernean Hydra, and that all wounds inflicted by them were incurable, that is, no remedy had any effect in removing them ; and Nessus's tunic being soaked in his blood, was of course also impregnated with this venomous poison.

Dejanira having sent the tunic to Hercules as a present from herself, the unsuspecting hero dressed himself in it.

But, scarcely had he put on this fatal robe, than he felt a devouring fire glide even into the very marrow of his bones. Frightful pains at once seized all his limbs, and when he struggled to tear the deadly tunic from his shoulders, he at the same time tore off pieces of his flesh. Very soon the torture rendered him perfectly furious ; his deep chest heaved with frightful groans, which, it is said, made the sea-gods tremble in their deep abodes.

All at once he was seen tearing up immense rocks or tall mountain firs, which he threw into the valleys below with a loud crash. The unfortunate Lychas, Dejanira's servant, who had brought Hercules the cruel present, fell a victim to his devotion to his mistress ; for, having endeavored to approach the hero to offer him aid, the latter threw him into the sea, where he was immediately transformed into a rock which long preserved the appearance of the human figure.

However, this frightful agony, which had for a moment bewildered the noble soul of Hercules, gradually became

less violent, and the hero was once more intrepid and majestic as he had always been ; nevertheless the poison which was consuming him, continued its ravages, and he suddenly resolved to put an end to his life.

Then in his strong and sonorous voice, calling upon his friend Philoctetes (who had only quitted him on seeing what had befallen Lychas), to come and embrace him once more before his death, he recollected that he might communicate to his friend the frightful poison which was consuming him, and cried out with bitterness, "Alas ! I am no longer privileged even to embrace thee !"

So saying, he gathered together the trees which he had just rooted up, and proceeded to form an immense pile of them, like those on which the ancients burned their dead, as you have perhaps read in the Roman history. As soon as this melancholy work was accomplished, he ascended the pile himself, stretched on it the skin of the Nemean lion, which he had always preserved, and leaning on his club, he commanded Philoctetes to kindle the flame which was to reduce him to ashes. In gratitude for this last service, he bestowed on this Greek a quiver filled with the arrows dipped in the blood of the Lernean Hydra, which had proved so fatal to him, forbidding him ever to reveal the spot where he had expired, that so the fear of his reappearance might prevent other monsters and robbers from infesting the world.

After this, my little friends, the hero appeared more tranquil, and when the flame had almost entirely encircled him, Philoctetes perceived his countenance as serene as when he was travelling over the earth armed with his club. After his death, Jupiter took him up into Olympus, that he might there receive the divine honors which his toils

and his courage entitled him to ; he gave him the youthful Phœbe in marriage, and commanded that mortals should raise altars to him.

This fable of Hercules, which has detained us a long time, my children, is certainly one of the most interesting which I could relate to you ; but as it is proper that you should know the most natural explanation which has been given of it, I must tell you, that there is a striking likeness between the Hercules of the Greeks and the Osiris of the Egyptians, who were both of them ingenious personifications of the sun. The twelve labors of Hercules represented the twelve months of the year, which the sun in its yearly course continually renews ; and when you shall have learned something of the course of the celestial signs, you will more easily understand the principal adventures of this fabulous personage.

#### QUESTIONS FOR EXAMINATION.

What race of monsters existed in the mountains of Thessaly ?

What was the fate of the greater number of them ?

What is related of Hercules and Dejanira ?

What did Nessus attempt ? and how was he punished ?

What did he bequeathe to Dejanira ?

What use did Dejanira make of the Centaur's robe ? and what was the result ?

What became of Lychas ?

Describe Hercules's conduct to Philoctetes.

How did Hercules put an end to his sufferings ?

How was his bravery rewarded after his death ?

How is the fable of the Centaurs explained ?

What explanation has been given of the fable of Hercules ? and what did his twelve labors signify ?

## THE LABYRINTH OF CRETE.

Having spoken to you of Theseus, my little friends, whilst narrating the fable regarding Hercules, I must now acquaint you with one of that Grecian hero's adventures, which will give you a high idea of his courage and resolution.

Minos, the king of the island of Crete, the same who, after his death, became one of the three judges of the infernal regions, having declared war against the Athenians, had made a vow to sacrifice yearly a magnificent white bull to Neptune, if that god would vouchsafe to award him the victory. As it turned out, the king of Crete did vanquish his enemies, and during several years he kept his promise to the god ; but afterwards, finding, probably, that so handsome a bull was too expensive, he wished to substitute in its place another of a less remarkable color. Neptune, irritated by this ingratitude and want of faith, caused a monster to spring out of the sea, half man, half bull, to whom they gave the name of Minotaur, because it belonged to Minos, and obliged the king to feed this monster, during one whole day of each year, with human flesh.

This appeared a very horrible necessity to Minos, who thus found himself threatened with having some of his subjects devoured every year by the Minotaur, when the idea struck him to force the Athenians, in acknowledgment of his victory, to send him yearly seven youths and seven young girls to appease the monster's rage. This cruel custom was observed for a long time ; and, once a year, a vessel with black sails left the port of Athens, and bore to the island of Crete the fourteen victims which the Minotaur was to devour.



Now Minos, not knowing where to confine such a ferocious animal as the Minotaur, had made Dædalus, the most skilful workman of the country, construct a garden, called the Labyrinth, where there were so many byways, alleys, and paths of every kind, that, when once one entered it, it seemed impossible to find one's way out again. This is not the first time, if my memory serves me, that you have met with this word labyrinth in your reading. Ancient history speaks also of an Egyptian palace which bore this name, and which was composed of such a number of apartments that it was difficult to find one's way through them.

However this be, the labyrinth of Crete, where the Minotaur was confined, had been planned with so much art, that Dædalus himself, who had been aided by his son Icarus in constructing it, found no other means of getting out but by fabricating for Icarus and himself wings of birds' feathers, stuck together with wax, by means of which they rose into the air, and thus escaped from the island of Crete, being afraid lest Minos should shut them up in the labyrinth. Unluckily, during this miraculous flight, young Icarus having imprudently approached too near the sun, in order to contemplate it at his ease, the wax which held together the feathers of his wings melted with the heat of this planet, and the imprudent creature fell into the sea, which, from that time, was called the Icarian sea. Dædalus, more fortunate or more prudent, reached his journey's end alone, and retired into Sicily, where he soon after died of grief for the loss of his son.

It is certainly needless for me to remark to you, my children, that this fable of Icarus, like the one regarding Phaeton, is a useful lesson for those whose pride leads

them to undertake what is beyond their power. The imprudence of this young Greek resembles that of many children, who, by attempting to speak of things beyond their age, proclaim to everybody that they are only silly parrots.

Meanwhile, Theseus, son of Egeus, king of Athens, having learnt that the vessel which was to transport to the Minotaur his fourteen victims was ready to sail, placed himself, spite of his father's prayers, among the youths destined for the sacrifice, carefully concealing under his dress a sword, with which he purposed to attack the monster ; but his courage would have been of no avail, if Ariadne, Minos's own daughter, who chanced to be on the shore when the young Athenians landed, compassionating his youth, had not presented him with a ball of thread, by means of which he might follow out the turnings and windings of the labyrinth.

This precious thread was made by Theseus the means of saving his companions and destroying the Minotaur ; for instantly as the hero perceived the monster, he sprang upon him and pierced him with his sword a thousand times ; then, with the help of Ariadne's thread, which he had taken care to fasten to the door of the Labyrinth, he without difficulty found the road to the shore, and regained his vessel, taking the princess on board with him, in order to save her from her father's resentment.

During the return voyage to Athens, which lasted a long time, all the passengers having landed, I know not for what purpose, in the island of Naxos, Theseus had the ingratitude to abandon the good Ariadne, to whom he owed his life, on this desert rock while she was asleep. Shortly after this base treachery of Theseus, Bacchus, who was re-

turning from his Indian travels, having also landed at Naxos, found this princess still there, succeeded in consoling her, and then married her. He gave her, as a wedding gift, a magnificent crown of gold, one of Vulcan's most exquisite productions, which, after the death of Ariadne, was placed among the stars, where it figures as a constellation, called at the present day Ariadne's crown.

As to Theseus, my children, he was severely punished for his ingratitude; for, having forgotten in his hurry to change the black sails of the vessel which carried him, his aged father Egeus recognised the dismal ship at a distance, and not doubting but that it brought him the news of his son's death, he threw himself into the sea. From that time, the portion of the Mediterranean which bathes the Athenian shore has been called the Egean sea.

#### QUESTIONS FOR EXAMINATION.

Who was Minos? and what vow did he make to Neptune?

What penalty did Minos incur by failing to pay Neptune the promised tribute?

What obligation did Minos impose upon the Athenians?

Describe the Labyrinth.

In what other country was such a labyrinth to be found?

By what means did Dædalus and Icarus escape from the labyrinth?

What became of Dædalus and Icarus?

What does this fable of Icarus remind us of?

Who was Theseus?

What exploit did he undertake?

By what means did he accomplish it?

What became of Ariadne?

What became of Egeus?

## THE ARGONAUTS.

Hercules and Theseus, whose most memorable adventures you are now acquainted with, my little friends, were not the only heroes who owed their celebrity to the fables of Grecian Mythology, and I am now about to relate to you one of the most marvellous expeditions which tradition has handed down to us.

There was formerly in the mountains of Thessaly, a good old man named Eson, who had been previously king of Iolchos, a city of that country, but who had been driven from his throne by an usurper called Pelias. Eson had a son called Jason, who was young and brave, and of whom an oracle had predicted, while he was yet a child, that he would one day become one of the most powerful princes of Greece.

Now Eson having persuaded his son to repair to Pelias's kingdom, to see if the time had not arrived for the accomplishment of the oracle, the young man set out covered with the skin of a leopard, which he had himself killed in the chase, and armed with two lances, in the hope of finding some favorable opportunity for taking possession of Pelias's crown.

On the way Jason came to the bank of a river, where he met a poor old woman, who appeared very much perplexed at seeing no boat to take her over to the other shore. Immediately the young man, who was good and compassionate, approached her, and politely offered to take her upon his shoulders, and in this manner to carry her across the river. The old woman seemed enchanted at this proposal, which she accepted, but scarcely had



Jason set her down on the other shore, when suddenly transforming herself into a beautiful and majestic woman, she appeared under her true form, for she was a goddess, and moreover one of the most powerful of them—in a word, it was the proud Juno herself, who had thus taken the form of an old woman in order to test Jason's benevolence. The latter, penetrated with respect, fell at her feet, and the goddess did not leave him without promising her protection in whatever he should undertake.

It will strike you, perhaps, that this fable very much resembles the tales of "Catskin" and the "Sleeping Beauty in the Wood," in which the fairies almost always appear under the guise of old women, in order to test the benevolence of young people. But you ought not to be surprised at this, for these fairy tales have been written by persons who were well acquainted with mythology.

Meanwhile, my good friends, Jason having arrived at Pelias's court, this prince, warned by a dream that this young man would one day injure him mortally, had a great mind to destroy him, but not daring to proceed to such an extremity, and desirous of a good opportunity to get rid of him, he proposed to Jason to give him the command of a vessel, with which he should go to distant countries, to seize upon the fleece of a golden ram which was hung up in a tree, and guarded by a dragon, whose mouth vomited forth flames.

Jason was too brave and enterprising to shrink from the dangers of such an expedition, he therefore accepted Pelias's proposition, and calling around him the most valiant warriors of Greece, he proposed this enterprise to them as an exploit worthy of their courage and their resolution. The vessel which the king gave them had been constructed, it

was said, after Minerva's own plan; it was called Argo, which signifies prompt or active, and therefore, those who embarked in it received the name of Argonauts, a word which signifies mariners of the Argo.

Hercules, who was living at that time, was one of the first to offer himself, as well as his friend Theseus; then came two brothers called Castor and Pollux, or the DioscURI, reputed sons of Jupiter, and brothers of the beautiful Helen, whose capture by Paris occasioned the siege of Troy. It was asserted that Castor and Pollux were so fondly attached to each other, that one of them having been killed in battle, his brother had obtained from the gods the privilege of sharing with him the time that he himself had still to live, so that they might never be separated.

Next to the DioscURI came Tiphys, the most skilful pilot of his time, and who on this account was called the son of Neptune, and Lynceus, who had such keen sight that he could distinguish the rocks and marine monsters even at the bottom of the sea. Several other heroes, not less famous, joined Jason's expedition, but what most charmed the whole party, was the being joined by Orpheus, who they expected would beguile the tedium of the long voyage they were about to undertake: he was the son of Apollo, and certainly the most skilful musician that had ever been heard, for when he played on the flute, the rocks and forests were moved, and the wild beasts came and licked his feet.

As an instance of this, it was related that Orpheus, having on the very day of his marriage been deprived, by the bite of a serpent, of his wife Eurydice, whom he loved more than life itself, went down into hell to beg her back

of Pluto, and that Cerberus, charmed by the tones of his lyre, had crouched at his feet to listen to him. The god of the dead, equally moved by the harmony which Orpheus drew forth from his instrument, granted his request, and permitted Eurydice to return with her husband to the earth, on the sole condition that the latter should have confidence enough in his word not to look back to ascertain if she was following him, before he had reached the entrance into daylight. Orpheus, transported with joy, was already near the limits of Pluto's empire, when forgetting his promise he turned his head, to assure himself that Eurydice had not quitted him, when the pitiless tyrant of the dead resumed his prey, and no prayer thenceforward could soften his heart.

It was accompanied by this little troop of heroes that Jason landed at Colchos, the country of the famous golden fleece. Hercules was the only one who quitted them on the passage, that he might accomplish the twelve labors to which he was condemned; but although his club and his arrows would have been of great service in so perilous an expedition, still not one of these valiant warriors doubted of success. On arriving at Colchos, Jason's first step was to repair to the palace of the king of this country, who was called *Ætes*, in order to ask his permission to carry off the precious fleece; but *Ætes* considered this treasure as his principal wealth, and in order to intimidate Jason he sternly replied, that the golden fleece should be his if he would submit to the conditions that he should impose upon him.

These were to tame two bulls, whose feet and horns were of brass, and whose nostrils puffed out whirlwinds of fire, to harness them to a diamond plough with which

he must turn up a field consecrated to the god Mars, which field had the singular property of producing armed men when serpents' teeth were sown in it. Jason must besides attack these armed men, and kill them one by one; and moreover, these almost impossible exploits must be accomplished between the rising and setting of the sun, that is in the space of a single day.

Jason and his companions were struck dumb with astonishment at this proposition, so entirely above human power did such an exploit appear to them; but as they were exceedingly courageous, they accepted Ætes's conditions, without knowing, however, how they should get through them.

#### QUESTIONS FOR EXAMINATION.

Who was Eson?

Who was Jason?

On what expedition did Jason set forth? and what adventure did he meet with on the way?

How was he received by Pelias?

Who were the Argonauts? Mention their names and characteristics.

Relate the story of Orpheus and Eurydice.

What were the conditions on which Jason might possess himself of the golden fleece?

---

#### THE SORCERESS MEDEA.

Now I must tell you, my little friends, that the country of Colchos, where the Argonauts had just landed, was cele-



brated for the enchantments of all sorts of which it was supposed to have been the theatre. The earth produced a great number of poisonous herbs, with which the ancients were persuaded that magicians could accomplish all sorts of prodigies ; and most of the women of this country possessed a multitude of secrets which made them pass among some credulous persons for supernatural beings.

I believe I have already had occasion to remark to you, in another book, in what light these pretended wizards and their sorceries ought to be considered. You know as well as I do, that the ignorant alone put any faith in the follies which these quacks spread abroad ; and that at present few but those who cannot either read or write, can be persuaded that there ever have been sorcerers. For this reason I do not like nurses to lull children to sleep by relating to them those absurd tales which they have at their fingers' ends, because these narrations leave lasting and injurious impressions on young minds.

Now, one of the most famous sorceresses of Colchos was Medea, daughter of *Ætes*. Most frequently, my children, sorceresses are represented as old women, very ugly, and very much wrinkled, with bristling white hair, and holding a little wand, with which they perform a thousand juggling tricks. But Medea was by no means this hideous object ; on the contrary, her head was adorned with beautiful fair hair, she was young and handsome, and only applied herself to magic in order to satisfy her violent and irascible passions, for she was even more ill-natured than beautiful.

This princess having distinguished Jason among his companions, as he was leaving her father's palace, immediately conceived the idea of marrying him, so handsome and

charming did she think him ; and she determined to rescue him from the death which awaited him, if he should have the imprudence to submit to the conditions which *Ætes* imposed upon him. She, therefore, invoked all the resources of her art in order to secure victory to the young hero, to whom she secretly offered her aid, and who accepted it with gratitude.

In effect, seconded by *Medea*, and having received from her a liquid which being poured over his body and arms would render him invulnerable, that is, would prevent the possibility of his being wounded, the son of *Eson* rapidly accomplished all the labors that *Ætes* had imposed upon him. He tamed the two bulls, harnessed them to the diamond plough, turned up the field of *Mars*, and sowed the serpents' teeth, from whence there sprang up immediately armed giants, who almost all of them killed each other, so that *Jason* only had the trouble of fighting the few that were left, and this whole race of warriors was exterminated.

*Jason* had but one more obstacle to surmount before he could take possession of the farmer's golden fleece. This was the terrible dragon who guarded it, but *Medea* gave the hero another liquid, which she obtained from *Morpheus* himself, to put the monster to sleep ; and in effect, *Jason* had no sooner shaken a little branch dipped in this drug over the serpent, than it coiled itself up into a thousand folds, and fell fast asleep. In an instant, the warrior, taking advantage of this sleep, with his sword cut the knot which held the golden fleece suspended in the tree, and hastily gained his vessel, where his companions awaited him. He embarked, accompanied by *Medea*, loaded with a casket, which she said contained a treasure. The *Argo*

left the shore before the sun had risen to show that they had fled.

Shortly after this glorious expedition, the Argonauts dispersed over the earth, and several of them distinguished themselves by new exploits.

Orpheus, still inconsolable for the loss of Eurydice, retired into Thrace, the most savage country in Greece, where the Bacchantes in their frenzy tore him to pieces, because he had refused to worship their god; his head was thrown into a river, whose waves, it was asserted by the Greeks, long produced harmonious sounds.

Castor and Pollux, after having fought on earth and sea to deliver the world from several famous robbers, both died on the same day, and were placed among the stars, under the name of the Gemini. Sailors invoked their aid as the patrons of navigation, and the appearance of their constellation on the horizon was generally supposed to presage fine weather. At the Olympic games, the *athletæ* who prepared to contend for the prize of the wrestling-match or horse-race, offered sacrifices to them, because Castor was supposed to have been the first wrestler and Pollux the most skilful groom of his time. The Dioscuri were most frequently represented mounted on beautiful white horses, or as two young men locked in each other's embrace, their heads surmounted by a brilliant star.

Meanwhile, my little friends, Medea, after having escaped the anger of *Ætes*, had become the wife of Jason, and had given him two pretty little boys. By means of one of the magical secrets inclosed in the precious casket that she had brought from Colchos, she had succeeded in restoring to old Esen all the vigor of youth. The daughters of King Pelias having besought her to restore their father

also to youth, she contrived, in order to avenge herself of this prince, to persuade them that if they would cut his body into pieces and have them boiled in a cauldron with some herbs that she selected for them, Pelias also would again become young and vigorous. We may easily believe that such a remedy was not successful, and the unfortunate Peliades were left to regret the having by their credulity abridged their father's life.

This atrocious revenge of Medea's was but the prelude to the furious passions which she indulged in against her husband himself. Having heard that Jason had determined to take another wife, called Glauce, a thing which was sometimes done in those days, she determined to prevent this new marriage and destroy this unfortunate girl.

Again drawing out of her formidable casket the most subtle poisons, which she reserved for the enemies she most detested, she secretly prepared a drug not less fatal than the blood of the Lernean Hydra, and having soaked in it a robe embroidered with magnificent diamonds, she sent this robe as a present to Glauce, who had the imprudence to put it on. Immediately this unfortunate lady experienced the same tortures which the centaur Nessus's tunic had inflicted upon Hercules, and which could only be terminated by a terrible death.

Jason, in despair, ran to Medea's palace, whence she had disappeared, mounted on a winged dragon, after having herself slain her two children, and leaving him to be informed that the Argo would avenge her.

From that time nothing further was heard of the enchantress Medea; and Jason, inconsolable for all the misfortunes that this cruel woman had been the cause of, going one day to visit the Argo, which had been drawn up



dry upon the shore, a piece of wood fell from this vessel and broke his skull. Thus was accomplished the odious Medea's prediction, and the fable regarding her certainly deserves to be remembered.

#### QUESTIONS FOR EXAMINATION.

- For what was the country of Colchos remarkable?  
Describe Medea.  
What service did she render Jason?  
What fate did Orpheus meet with?  
What is told of Castor and Pollux?  
What service did Medea render Eson?  
What trick did she practise on the Peliades?  
Relate the story of Glauce.  
What was Medea's last act? and how did she disappear?  
How was Jason killed?

---

#### A MYTHOLOGICAL WALK.

Agriculture and rural toil, as you may have remarked, my good friends, play a conspicuous part in the Greek and Roman Mythology.

Ceres instructed mankind in the art of cultivating the fields, and gathering in their fruits; Bacchus taught them the culture of the vine; Apollo, during his exile, employed himself in keeping sheep; and it was to the decision of a simple shepherd that the three goddesses deferred, at the nuptials of Thetis and Peleus. You will not therefore be surprised that I should now speak to you of the divinities intrusted with the care of the woods, meadows, crops, flowers, fruits, and other gifts of nature.

That we may become better acquainted with them, we will visit them in their chosen retreats ; and thus learn to distinguish their appearance and attributes, when we meet with them elsewhere.

Let us begin our walk by traversing that garden, where a thousand flowers vieing with each other in variety of coloring, enamel the ground. The lovely Flora presided at the birth of these elegant roses, these fragrant lilies, these sweet violets ; her reign upon earth began with the spring, and her husband was Zephyrus, the gentlest and most active of the children of Eolus. This charming pair perfumed the air with a thousand exquisite odors in the fine days of summer ; and Zephyrus, who was represented as a rosy youth, with butterfly's wings, was never still but when by Flora's side, who was depicted as a young nymph, crowned with roses, and holding in her left hand a horn of plenty reversed, whence escaped a multitude of flowers.

Let us pass through this orchard, where the trees are covered with excellent pears, juicy apples, magnificent downy peaches, and all the exquisite productions of autumn ; this is the abode of Pomona, the goddess of fruits, whose husband was Vertumnus, the god of gardens. This god, whose name is derived from a Latin word signifying change, was said to change his appearance very often, according to the different seasons of the year, which vary several times before the fruit is matured. Flora, Pomona, and Vertumnus, were not known among the Greeks, but they figured among the Etruscan divinities, whose worship the Romans had adopted.

Flora and Pomona had temples at Rome, where the latter goddess was represented seated on a large basket filled

with fruit; she held some apples in her left hand, and in her right the branch of a tree.

On entering this grove, where we shall find some shade, and rest ourselves for a moment, do you not hear the tones of a flute? It is doubtless Pan's, the god of shepherds, the most celebrated of the rural divinities, who was considered the guardian of flocks.

This god (who could not have been either handsome or attractive, since he was represented with the horns and feet of a goat), having one day espied the young Syrinx, one of Diana's nymphs, thought her so beautiful, that he proposed to marry her. This nymph, alarmed at a compliment so unsuited to the appearance of the person who addressed her, fled away as fast as Daphne had done from Apollo, and threw herself into the Ladon, a river which was supposed to be her father. The gods, touched with pity, changed her into a reed; and Pan, to console himself for his loss, cut some stalks from this plant, with which he made a flute with seven pipes, called at the present day Pan's flute. This instrument, which is of a very simple construction, was adopted by shepherds, as well as the crook which the god used in guarding his flock. He was assisted in this care by the goddess Pales, whose festivals were celebrated at Rome with great pomp in the spring season. The shepherds who repaired thither from all parts, crowned with branches of olive and rosemary, which are used to purify stables, brought with them a great number of noisy instruments, such as drums and cymbals. These festivals had been instituted by Romulus the very day on which Rome was founded, and continued to be observed in that city during a great many centuries.

In approaching this moss-covered grotto formed by

rocks, let us be careful, my children, not to raise our voices; it is, perhaps, inhabited by a nymph who has a habit of repeating everything she hears said. She is called Echo, and the fable regarding her is curious enough.

A young hunter, called Narcissus, who had never had an opportunity of seeing his own face (as mirrors were not common in those days), chanced to descry his image in the bosom of a limpid fountain, and found himself so very beautiful, that he could not withdraw his eyes from the brook, on whose banks he died of exhaustion. The gods, pitying, I don't know why, this senseless creature, who fancied that his pretty face was surpassingly charming, changed him into the daffodil, a sort of flower which flourishes on the banks of brooks, and over which it bends. The nymph Echo, a friend of Narcissus, was so afflicted at his melancholy death, that she withered away with grief, retaining nothing of her former self but her voice. From that time she retired into the most barren rocks, which she is not allowed to leave. I need not, I think, explain to you that this fable is only a device of the ancients to attribute to a divinity that vague sound repeated by certain rocks, when the voice is raised on approaching.

Although all the nations of antiquity have honored the gods who presided over the labors of the field, we must remark that the highest honors were paid them by the Egyptians and the Etruscans. This latter people reckoned an infinite number of rural divinities, the principal of which were the Fauni and Sylvani, the guardians of forests; the Napæ, nymphs adorned with field-flowers, who watched over the meadows; the Oreades, goddesses crowned with moss, whose dwelling was among the mountain grottoes; and, finally, the Dryades, whose foreheads



were adorned with violets, because this little flower grows in groves, which were under their care. Besides this, each individual tree was placed under the protection of a nymph called Hamadryad, whose life was bound up with that of the tree.

Let us conclude our walk by approaching that coarse landmark, which serves to fix the boundary between this field and the neighboring one. Well, this landmark is the image of yet another divinity. This was the god Terminus, the guardian of property.

When Tarquin the Elder began to build the Capitol at Rome, the statue of this god was found, such as you see it at the present day, on the very spot where they had determined to lay the foundation of this edifice. The augurs being consulted as to what had best be done with this rural god, declared that he could not be taken from the spot which he occupied, and that he would prove the preserver of the Capitol. The Romans, always ingenious in interpreting everything favorably, concluded from this circumstance, that the god Terminus, being fixed in their Capitol, would certainly prove one of the chief guardians of the frontiers of their empire. When you learn their history, you will be able to tell me whether this god performed his duty.

The worship paid to the rural divinities was as simple as their worshippers were : jars of milk were offered to them ; honey, wine, and sometimes pretty little lambs, which were afterwards restored to their mothers, for blood rarely flowed in honor of these benevolent gods. The reason is, that gratitude led men to their altars, while fear more frequently raised magnificent temples to those gods of whom they stood in awe.

QUESTIONS FOR EXAMINATION.

What occupations did the Greek and Roman Mythology honor?

Recall the occupations of Ceres, Bacchus, and Apollo.

What were supposed to be under the care of the different divinities?

Who were Flora and Zephyr?

Who were Pomona and Vertumnus?

Did any of these gods have temples built to them?

Who was Pan?

Relate the story regarding Diana's nymph Syrinx.

Describe Pan's flute.

Who aided Pan in his shepherd cares?

Relate the fable regarding Narcissus and Echo.

Which of the ancient nations honored the rural gods most?

Which were the principal rural divinities of the Etruscans?

What especial divinity was the guardian of property?

What is related of the statue found in building the Capitol at Rome?

What was the character of the worship offered to the rural gods?

## MYTHOLOGY OF THE SCANDINAVIANS.

## THE GODS OF THE NORTH.

WE must now bid farewell to the burning sky of the East, that we may visit the frozen regions of the North, where other fables were in circulation, of a very different character, but which we ought also to be acquainted with. These fables, extraordinary as they may appear to you, my little friends, deserve, nevertheless, all your attention, because they fashioned the religion of those barbarous nations who are so often spoken of in the Roman history, and that of the middle ages. The gods, whose adventures are related in these fables, were formerly the gods of the Franks, the ancestors of the French nation, which must render them particularly interesting to French youth. We shall not find those smiling images of the divinities of Greece and Italy, their sports, their dances, their concerts, their metamorphoses into flowers and trees; a gloomy sky, loaded with thick fogs, will replace the brilliant sky of the Asiatic countries. We shall find the rivers and the sea itself covered with mountains of ice, the trees loaded with frost, the forests and caverns peopled with monsters and giants, and, together with all this, fearful gods, who breathe nothing but war, and who demand from their worshippers no other merit than a fierce and sanguinary courage.

This will appear to you more alarming than instructive, my dear children; but the history of those gods is at the

same time very curious—sometimes even very amusing—and I should be sorry if you were not to learn it.

Before the world was created (said the people of the North, who were commonly called Scandinavians), there existed but two divinities, one of whom, called the Universal Father, inhabited a palace of light and fire; and the other, known under the name of Surtur the Black, was confined in Hell, the abode of darkness, where flowed several foaming and poisonous rivers. The Palace of Fire and the dwelling of Surtur were only separated by an immense empty space, which was nothing else but the abyss.

Now, it happened that the poisonous rivers of hell, in proportion as they left their source, grew colder and colder, and had for a long time formed into mountains of ice, when a warm breath was sent by the Universal Father to melt the congealed vapors, which falling, drop by drop, took the form of a man, or rather of a giant, so enormous—so very enormous—that we cannot now form an idea of him. The Scandinavians gave to this giant the name of Ymir.

Ymir was thus entirely alone in the midst of the hoar frost which surrounded him; and as he could find nothing to fill the gulf of his immense stomach, the giant was in great danger of soon dying of hunger, when the drops of water, which the heat continued to melt, formed themselves into a wonderful cow, from whose bag flowed four great rivers of milk, by which Ymir was nourished. In this way, this extraordinary personage contrived to live on, and became the father of a race of giants almost as tall as himself, who were called the Giants of the Frost, on account of their origin. As to the prodigious cow, she, not



finding either grass or forage, supported herself by licking the stones, which were covered with salt and hoar-frost; so, in all likelihood, she became in a short time miserably poor.

But while this animal was thus licking the rocks, Ymir suddenly saw these stones covered with human hair. In an instant, a head was formed, a body, and finally a complete man, handsome, young, and athletic. This man was named Bure, and he had a son called Bör. He it was who became the father of the Northern gods, whose history is now to occupy our attention.

Now, lo, and behold! one day, the sons of Bör together attacked Ymir, killed him (I don't exactly know how), and having dragged his body to the brink of the abyss, threw him into the immense pit which separated the Universal Father's palace from hell. The earth was formed of his flesh, the sea of his blood, the mountains of his bones, the trees of his hair, and the rocks of his teeth.

They then took his skull, that is, the top of his head, to form the arch of heaven, and appointed four dwarfs to support the four corners. These dwarfs indicated the four cardinal points, which you doubtless understand from learning geography. Finally, they threw his brains into the air, and thus formed the clouds.

After this, the sons of Bör built for themselves, with the giant's eyebrows, a formidable fort that they called Midgard, which means the centre town, to which they retreated in order to escape the anger of Ymir's children, who, having become very numerous, were ever after the enemies of the gods.

You will tell me, my children, that this is a very absurd tale, and that certainly no reasonable person ever could

have believed it. I am entirely of your opinion ; but formerly, the Scandinavians were so ignorant, that, unable to conceive a god sufficiently powerful to have created heaven and earth, they thought to explain in this way the wonders of creation.

Now, if one of you were to ask me the interpretation of these fables, I should reply that the giants, the sons of Ymir, are none other than the men of the North, fierce and ignorant, and that the race of the gods was doubtless that of some eastern strangers, who carried into these distant countries several of the religious ideas common among the people of Asia. The Universal Father and the Black Surtur of the Scandinavians very much resemble the gods Ormuzd and Ahriman of the Persians, whose mythological history I have related in the first part of this book ; and this will not be the only point of resemblance that we shall discover between these two nations.

#### QUESTIONS FOR EXAMINATION.

Why are these fables worthy of interest ?

What is the general character of the gods of these frozen regions ?

What divinities did the Scandinavians believe to have existed before the creation of the world ?

Describe their different abodes.

How did the giant Ymir grow into life ?

How was he provided with food ?

What name was given to his children ?

How was the wonderful cow fed ?

How was Bure formed ? and who was his son ?

What use did Bör's sons make of the giant Ymir's body ?

Describe Midgard.

What led the Scandinavians to imagine these singular fables ?

How may these fables be explained ?

## THE PALACE OF ODIN.

After having conquered the giant Ymir, and appropriated his spoils, my little friends, Odin, who was the most valiant of the sons of Bör, built a luminous bridge of three colors, by which they might climb up into heaven, and persuaded his brothers to follow him up to this divine abode, where they built several cities. At the same time, for fear lest the children of Ymir should pursue the gods even into this sacred retreat, they appointed Heimdall, one of their number, to stand constantly at the extremity of the great bridge, and to defend the entrance into heaven against the giants. This marvellous bridge; placed between heaven and earth, should recall to you that which led to the dwelling of Ormuzd, the benevolent divinity of the Persians, the guardianship of which he had confided to his faithful dog.

Now, this god Heimdall had such keen hearing, that he could hear the grass growing in the meadows and the wool on the sheep's backs; his sleep was lighter than that of a bird, and he was gifted with such piercing sight that he could see, night or day, all that was going on a hundred leagues off. Heimdall was armed with a flaming sword, and he possessed a trumpet with such a penetrating sound that it could be heard at the same time in the four corners of the world. This god was, therefore, the porter and guardian of heaven, and nobody could enter without his permission.

The companions of Odin, who were but twelve in number, without reckoning the goddesses whom they had married, had too much courage and ability to give themselves up to inglorious sloth.

First, they constructed a magnificent hall, in which were placed twelve seats, where they sate to administer justice, and in the midst of which arose Odin's throne. This hall, which was called the abode of joy, glittered with precious stones and admirable carved work, which had cost them nothing, because they knew how to manufacture gold and other metals for themselves, by working on an anvil with hammers. Thus they possessed such a great quantity of this precious material that they made all the furniture of their palace of it, and even their horses' harness. There it was that the gods met together when they wished to pass sentence on the dwarfs, that is, little monsters in human shape, who lived concealed in the cavities among the rocks, where they were employed in carving crystals and manufacturing swords and armor for the giants and other enemies of the gods.

However, the latter did not always meet in this celestial hall ; and sometimes their tribunal was transported under an enormous tree, which reached the skies, and which was certainly much larger than any that we can form an idea of.

The foliage of this tree, which was called the Ash Ydrasil, stretched over the whole globe like an immense umbrella. It had three roots—one was in the dwelling of the gods, the second on the earth, and the third was in hell, where it was gnawed by a monstrous serpent. The smallest branches of the ash were so thick that four stags continually sported on them, and a pretty squirrel was incessantly running up and down, in order to repeat to an eagle perched on the very top of the tree what the serpent of hell was about. Finally, lest this ash, which was quite as old as the world, should suddenly wither up, three fairies,



called Urda, Verdandi, and Skulda,—that is to say, the past, the present, and the future,—were entirely occupied in sprinkling it with water, which they drew out of a clear fountain situated under its celestial root. This was, you will agree, a very wonderful tree, and one in comparison with which the largest oaks of our forests are but trifling blades of grass; but you will think with me that those who invented these stories rather wished to astonish their auditors than to persuade people of their truth.

Since I have mentioned to you the three fairies who watered the ash-tree Ydrasil, I must tell you that, among the Scandinavians, nothing was so common as these fabulous personages. There were good fairies, and others who were very wicked; and formerly, many people believed that, at the birth of every child, one of these fairies was always present to endow it liberally with good or bad qualities, as we have all read in the “Sleeping Beauty in the Wood,” and in several other stories that nurses used formerly to relate to children.

Although Odin had founded several cities in heaven, dazzling with light and riches, the one which he preferred to all others was built of pure silver, and it was there his throne was fixed, whence he could with a single glance take in the whole universe. This town was called Asgard, and there he usually lived with his wife Frigga, the most beautiful and powerful of the goddesses, whose principal occupation was to read the future, and his eldest son, Thor, the most valiant and most terrible of the gods after Odin.

At some distance from this town arose the Valhalla, a magnificent palace, with five hundred and forty doors. It was into this wonderful palace, that Odin,—who, on this account, was surnamed the father of battles,—admitted,

after their death, all those warriors who had fallen in battle in order to form a numerous army, with whom to withstand the giants, when these should assail heaven. The Valhalla was truly the Elysium of the brave, and I need not tell you that the timid could never gain admission into it.

One of Odin's most important occupations was constantly to practise this army of heroes (so were the warriors of the Valhalla called) in the same warlike exercises in which they had distinguished themselves upon earth. Every morning, as soon as a celestial cock had crowed, the five hundred and forty gates of the palace opened at the same moment, and the innumerable troop came forth, dressed in strong armor, in order to engage in those terrible combats, in which their greatest pleasure was to cut each other in pieces; but as soon as the hour for the repast had struck, each one remounted his horse, safe and sound, just as if he had never fought at all, and returned to the Valhalla, where Odin caused to be distributed to them by three goddesses, called the Valkyrias, the flesh of a marvellous wild-boar, which, although cooked and cut up every morning, always became whole and entire again every evening, ready to serve for the next day's meal.

The Valkyrias, whose duty it also was to descend to the earth during the course of a battle, in order to designate the warriors who were to die the death of the brave, were appointed to pour out to them in heaven, a delicious drink called hydromel, which the northern nations are still exceedingly fond of.

As to Odin, he sat at the same table with the heroes, and all that the Valkyrias served up to him, he threw to two enormous wolves, who never quitted him. During

this repast, two crows, perched upon his shoulders, whispered in his ears all that they had seen in the world ; these crows were called Mind and Memory, and every day Odin sent them to the earth to bring back to him an account of what was passing there.

The most famous of Odin's temples was in the town of Upsal, in Sweden, where he was worshipped, together with his wife Frigga, and his son Thor. This goddess was there represented seated on cushions, between her husband and son, the one holding a naked sword, the other having a crown on his head, a sceptre in one hand, and a club in the other. (See Pl. XIV. fig. 26.)

Frigga was also sometimes represented under the form of a beautiful woman, crowned with myrtle, holding a globe in her right hand, and three golden apples in her left ; behind her appeared the three Graces, in a car drawn by swans ; she presided over abundance, and the fertility of the earth, and she then very much resembled the goddesses Juno and Ceres of the Grecian Mythology, since she was, like them, the mother of the gods, and the nurse of mankind.

The worship offered to these divinities at Upsal partook of the barbarism of their worshippers : horses, cocks, and hogs were sacrificed to them, and even human beings, children of kings, and kings themselves.

The most usual manner of accomplishing these frightful sacrifices, was to lay the victim between two enormous stones, where it was crushed, and the force with which the blood spouted out upon the bystanders, betokened the merit of the sacrifice in the eyes of the divinity.

The Scandinavians attributed to Odin the invention of the Runes, a sort of mysterious characters, some traces of





ODIN.

THOR.

FRIGGA.





which are still found on several rocks in Sweden and Norway. They attributed to this magic writing the property of curing certain diseases, of disclosing the future, of calming or exciting tempests, and even of recalling the dead to life. I need not tell you, my little friends, that such a belief could only belong to a savage nation, who in their simplicity supposed that there are some hidden means of changing the laws of nature, and opposing the decrees of Providence.

### QUESTIONS FOR EXAMINATION.

Describe the bridge constructed by Odin.

What post was given to Heimdall? and what were his peculiar powers?

Describe Odin's companions.

Describe the hall constructed by them.

Where else did they hold their tribunal?

Describe the Ydrasil.

What was the Scandinavian belief regarding fairies?

Describe Asgard. How was it inhabited?

Give some account of the Valhalla.

Who were admitted into it?

How did the heroes of the Valhalla pass their time?

Who were the Valkyrias? and what were their offices?

How was Odin occupied during the repasts in the Valhalla?

Where was the most famous of Odin's temples?

How was the goddess Frigga there represented?

How was Frigga represented when she resembled Juno and Ceres?

What were the sacrifices offered to these divinities? and in what manner were the victims immolated?

What is said of the Runes?

## ODIN'S HORSE.

Meanwhile, my little friends, the valiant Odin, the general of the army of heroes inhabiting the Valhalla, had not yet been able to find a horse who could carry him from one end of the world to the other, when, as it sometimes happened, he took it into his head to visit the earth, and witness the combats of simple mortals.

One day, the gods wishing to build in their town of Midgard, a citadel, where they might find refuge from the assaults of the giants, sent for an architect, who promised them to build a beautiful fortress, entirely without help, during a single winter, on condition that they would give him in reward the goddess Frigga, and the sun and moon also, if his work was finished on the first day of the following spring. Now this architect was in fact, though he did not appear to be so, of the race of giants, and moreover a very skilful magician, who wished in this way to deprive the gods of their most valuable possessions; for the empire of Odin must have been irretrievably lost, so soon as his enemies possessed themselves of the goddess who renders the earth fertile, and the two planets which give it light.

The gods consented, however, to this bargain, to which they even bound themselves by oath, so desirous were they of having a citadel; but as they were not very true to their word, they secretly flattered themselves that the architect would not have his work finished in so short a time, and that consequently they would not be obliged to pay him the stipulated price.

However, the magician possessed a wonderful horse,

who alone was worth more to him than a multitude of workmen. By the first night this animal, who was prodigiously strong, had drawn into Midgard such an enormous quantity of stones and materials of every kind, that in a few days the walls of the new citadel were raised. The master and the horse continued to toil on in this manner with so much zeal, that the winter was scarcely drawing to a close, when the architect, whose task was almost completed, already began to talk of claiming his reward on the day appointed, which placed the gods in a terrible dilemma.

I leave you to imagine what would have become of the world, if all at once the giant had carried off the sun and moon under his arm, and transported the goddess Frigga into the country of the frosts. Men would have thought at first that they had mistaken the hour, and that the light of day had not yet reached them; but soon, when days of darkness succeeded each other, and nights deprived of the pale light of the moon, they would have fallen into the most frightful despair. The earth, no longer warmed by the sun's rays, would have become frozen and barren; the plants would have withered upon the earth; the sea would have been struck motionless, and a mortal chill would have pervaded the whole globe. Then men, to provide a refuge from the cold, would have been reduced to burning the forests, vessels, houses, towns, and everything around them; they would have gathered round these blazing fire-sides, in order to see each other once more before they died; and they would have been terrified at contemplating by this ominous light their pale and meagre faces; in short, when everything had thus been consumed, the human race would have perished of cold and famine.

Happily such a great misfortune did not take place; and



it was one of the gods, called Loke, who discovered an expedient to prevent it. This god Loke was the most unworthy of all the inhabitants of Midgard, but, at the same time, the most cunning; and the others besought him to contrive some means of escaping this dreadful catastrophe. There remained but one day more for the conclusion of the work, and the architect's prodigious horse seemed to be redoubling his efforts in his master's service, when it struck Loke to bring suddenly from the neighboring forest a wild horse, which, by its neighing, should seem to be calling upon some companion. The architect's horse had no sooner heard this cry, which he had not heard for a long time, than, breaking his bridle and harness, he galloped off to the forest and escaped from his master, who was thus prevented from finishing on the appointed day the work which was so far advanced.

The gods then took advantage of Loke's cunning; and, in order to put an end to the giant's just complaints, one of them knocked him down with a club, and thrust him down into hell. Relieved from this apprehension, they instantly set about finishing their new citadel, which they completed in a few days, and without its costing them anything.

Some time after, my children, Odin keenly regretting not having kept the giant's excellent horse for himself, Loke brought him one, which was, he said, the son of this very horse, and which, to render him the more active, had eight feet. The god accepted it eagerly, and gave him the name of Sleipner, which signifies lightning.

It was with the help of this marvellous horse that Odin travelled from one end of the world to the other, and traversed space without being arrested by seas or mountains.

*But it be Loke's horse*

## QUESTIONS FOR EXAMINATION.

What price was required for building the citadel in Midgard?

Who was the architect? and by what means was he enabled to accomplish his task?

What would have been the consequence of paying the price agreed upon?

How was this evil averted, and by whom?

In what way did Odin obtain his horse Sleipner? and what is said of this animal?



## THE GOD LOKE AND HIS CHILDREN.

This god Loke, of whom I have just been speaking to you, had a handsome face and fine form, but he was also a very unworthy character, and his only pleasure consisted in lying and deceiving the other gods, in order to draw them into some snare; therefore, he was called among them the calumniator and deceiver—titles which he well deserved, as I shall soon prove to you by several anecdotes.

Loke had, therefore, so bad a reputation among the gods that, having been unable to persuade any one to marry him either in Midgard or the other celestial towns, he found himself obliged to take as his wife a woman of the race of giants, called Angerbode, whose name signified “messenger of evil.”

Now you must know, my little friends, that Angerbode soon brought into the world three monsters whom the gods justly considered as their most dangerous enemies; because Frigga had read in the future, that they would

one day cause the ruin of Odin's empire. The first of these monsters was an enormous wolf, called Fenris. He was as cunning as his father, and as strong as his mother, the giantess ; and I shall have to relate to you more than one fable regarding him.

The second was the great serpent of Midgard. At the moment of his birth, Odin, alarmed at his appearance, which was hideous, threw him into the sea, where he attained such a growth that he encircled the whole globe with his body, and could bite his tail besides.

Finally, the third monster was Hela, which means death, to whom Odin intrusted the government of the infernal regions, in order that she might receive into them all those who died of old age or sickness, for the Valhalla was exclusively appropriated to those warriors who fell gloriously in the field of battle.

He assigned to them in these sad abodes, which were, it was said, nine times as extensive as the world, vast apartments, solidly built, closed by impenetrable gratings, and which no one was ever permitted to leave, after having once entered them.

Her table was famine, her sleeping apartment grief, her knife hunger, her servant sloth, her door a precipice, her vestibule languor, her bed sickness, her tent cursing, and her habitual companions all the calamities which desolate and destroy mankind.

This fatal divinity was represented under a human form, one half of her body blue, the other half flesh-colored. But what rendered her appearance still more appalling was her fearful glance, which no living man could support.

As to the wolf Fenris, my little friends, from his childhood he appeared so formidable to all the gods, that only

one among them, called Tyr, was courageous enough to feed him, young as he still was. But soon the gods, perceiving that this animal as he grew became wild and fierce, resolved to get rid of him, as they had got rid of the two other monsters. In truth, the attempt was not an easy one, for the wolf was more spiteful than either his brother or sister, and was besides gifted with such prodigious strength that his slightest movement broke the best forged chains. They, therefore, resolved to use cunning with him, and the following is the device that they contrived to avoid his suspicion.

One day they presented to him a beautiful pair of chains, very strong and firm, and proposed to him to try if he could break them, when they had tied his four paws with them.

The wolf, who saw at once that this would be but sport to him, made no difficulty in suffering himself to be chained, and pretended to be overpowered with the weight of so many irons; but, when he saw the gods congratulating themselves on his having fallen into the trap they had laid for him, he only stretched out his four limbs, and the chains flew into bits. You may judge of the astonishment of the gods, who determined to take other measures for getting rid of a monster, whose strength surpassed anything they could have imagined.

At that time there lived in the country of the black Genii,—that is, in the bowels of the earth,—dwarfs, pretty much the same sort of creatures as the Cabiri of Egypt, who were famous for the solid chains which they understood how to fabricate. The gods having often heard the skill of these dwarfs spoken of, sent them a message begging they would forge for them a chain that nothing



could break, which these excellent workmen immediately supplied them with. Then they persuaded the wolf Fenris to go with them to a pleasant island, situated in the midst of a lake, and proposed to him to allow himself to be bound with this new chain, which was as flexible and light as a simple silken cord ; but the wolf was more cunning than any of them, and replied :

“That chain looks to me very light that you should suppose it so difficult to break it, unless, indeed, some secret enchantment imparts a supernatural strength to it. So, as I have good reasons for suspecting your intentions, I will not consent this time to allow myself to be tied unless one of you will agree to put his hand into my mouth, in order fully to convince me that this is not a new snare that you are trying to lay for me.”

The gods now looked at each other and became very much embarrassed, for none of them liked to give the wolf the hostage he demanded, well knowing that the monster would not let slip this opportunity of avenging himself as soon as he should find he was betrayed. At last, the courageous Tyr devoted himself, and thrust his hand into the wolf's mouth, who immediately allowed himself to be completely bound, still thinking he could easily break such weak chains ; but he soon became aware of the trick, and notwithstanding incredible efforts, he could not succeed in breaking them.

The gods then burst into a loud laugh—all except poor Tyr, whose hand was in an instant bitten off, and who was maimed from that time—while the wolf, rolling on the ground and howling fearfully, opened an immense mouth, which looked as if it would devour everything ; but they threw a sword at him which stuck through his two jaws,

and with all his efforts he could not save himself from being tied with the end of his chain to an immense rock which the gods forced down into the entrails of the earth.

The Scandinavians believed that this terrible wolf would remain in chains until the twilight of the gods, that is to say, until the end of the world, when he would devour the sun and the powerful Odin himself.

### QUESTIONS FOR EXAMINATION.

Describe the god Loke.

Whom did he marry? and what did his wife's name signify?

Who were their children?

Describe Hela's domain, and her companions.

What is said of Fenris? and how did the gods act towards him?

How did the gods obtain chains strong enough to bind Fenris?

What was Tyr's conduct?

How was Fenris finally disposed of?

What exploits did the Scandinavians believe Fenris was destined to perform?

---

### THE TRAVELS OF THOR.

The gods of the North, like those of Greece and Italy, my young friends, were very fond of travelling. Often, also, like the latter, they did not disdain to appear upon the earth under the form of simple mortals, and thus undertake long journeys, which were not always without risk to these divinities. We must place in the first rank of these travelling gods, the powerful Thor, eldest son of Odin and Frigga, whose club was a thunderbolt; who presided over

tempests, and regulated the seasons. This god used, during his frequent journeys, a very pretty equipage with two seats, drawn by two wooden goats, with silver bits. Two wooden goats, you will say, could not have trotted very fast, unless, indeed, the carriage had been one of those little spring cabriolets that run alone on a table; but when he set out, the god changed this team for a pair of real, active goats, who drew him rapidly along wherever he wished to go. -†

Besides his terrible club, which was irresistible, Thor also possessed a wonderful girdle, which had the power of doubling his strength when he put it on, besides a pair of iron gauntlets, without which he could not seize the handle of his club without danger of burning his fingers. One day, this god having determined to make a long journey over the earth, and afraid of being dull on the way, took as his companion the cunning Loke, because of the clever tricks that the latter knew how to play, in order to extricate himself from difficulties. Both of them got into the chariot, drawn by two very mettlesome goats, and set out.

When the evening came, the gods, who were fatigued with having jogged on all day, went into a peasant's house, and asked his hospitality for the night, which the latter readily granted, although he had no idea that he had to do with gods. But when, before going to bed, they wished to sup, nothing was to be found in the house to eat; and Thor determined to kill his two goats, which he immediately cooked, with an excellent sauce, and then made the host and his children partake of it, for the god was an excellent cook.

Now, the peasant had a son called Tialfe, and a daughter

15



Pl. IV.

MYTHOLOGIE DES SCANDINAVES.

Fig. 27.



11 long.

LE DIEU THOR EN VOYAGE.

called Raska, whom Thor directed to gather up the goats' bones carefully in their skin, which had been left stretched out near the table. But young Tialfe paid no attention to this direction, and cracking with his knife the bone of one of the goats' legs, he sucked out the marrow, without any one's perceiving it. You will now see how he was punished for his gluttony. The next day, very early, Thor, wishing to pursue his journey, stretched out his club, and immediately restored the two goats to their original form—for you know it cost the gods nothing to perform wonders; but when he was proceeding to harness them to his car, he perceived that one of these animals limped; and it was precisely the one whose leg Tialfe had broken in his greediness.

Now, the god Thor had not a very mild temper; and as soon as he found how he had been disobeyed, he knit his brow, and grasping his formidable club, would soon have reduced everything to ashes, but the shepherd and his family threw themselves at his feet in tears, and he consented to pardon them for this fault, provided Tialfe and Raska followed him in his travels, in exchange for his lame goat, which he left with their father. As to himself, mounting the other animal, he pursued his way. (See Pl. XV. fig. 27.)

These poor young people were then obliged to harness themselves to the chariot. But soon Tialfe, who was strong and active, took Thor's valise on his back; and all four of them swam over several seas, until at length they found themselves in a country which was entirely new to them.

One evening, the travellers reached a vast plain, where there was not a single tree to shelter them. As the night

was very dark, they were at a loss how to direct their steps, when chance led them to an extensive edifice, which appeared to them so large, that they were sure it must be the dwelling of some person of great consideration in the country. Nobody, indeed, appeared to open the door to them; but as it was very late, and they were very tired, they entered without ceremony, and passed a part of the night in one of the first chambers they came to, not without some anxiety indeed, because, from time to time, the house seemed to them agitated by a slight trembling of the earth, accompanied by a noise similar to the rumbling of thunder. Thor, who was the most valiant of the four, scarcely slept with more than one eye; he took his girdle and his war-gauntlets, and was very careful not to lay aside his formidable club.

When day appeared, the gods left the house, when the first object that presented itself was an immense man, lying on the ground in a deep sleep, and still snoring with all his might. This was the strange noise that the travellers had heard during the night, like a distant storm, and which had struck terror into them.

Thor had a great mind to take advantage of the moment to break the giant's head during his sleep; but the latter having awaked, the god, afraid to engage with an enemy of his size, contented himself with asking him what was his name.

The giant immediately replied: "My name is Skymmer, and I know that you are the little god Thor! who gave you leave, pray, to go along with your companions into my glove?" And in truth, my children, this house, which had seemed so large to the travellers, was nothing else than the giant's glove, the little finger of which was the room

in which they had slept. They were shocked at the danger they had run, when they reflected that if, during the night, the giant had attempted to put on his glove, he would have stifled them all without being aware of it.

However, the gigantic Skymmer was not wicked, and he proposed to Thor and his companions that they should travel together, which they consented to do; while he, taking under his arm an enormous valise, which apparently contained his baggage, walked on before them, taking such long steps, that although he did not have seven-league boots, like the ogre in "Little Thumb," he was often obliged to stop, to enable them to come up with him.

The following night, the travellers being desirous of some rest, Skymmer laid down under a great oak, after giving them permission to take their supper in his valise, where he assured them they would find more than one nice bit; but when they proceeded to do so, this valise, which was probably the handiwork of some magician, could not be opened with all their efforts, and for this evening they were obliged to do without supper. Thor, who had a very good appetite, got into such a rage on finding that the giant had tricked them, that he resolved to kill him that very night, during his sleep.

About midnight, Thor took his club, and striking a terrific blow on Skymmer's head, he thought he had stunned the giant, but the latter, half waking, called to Thor to tell him if a grain of dust had not fallen behind his ear. The god feigning, by Loke's advice, to be asleep, was careful not to answer him, and the giant soon began to snore in fine style. A moment after, Thor got up, and fully determined not to fail in his purpose this time, he took his measures so well, that he plunged his club up to the



handle in the giant's cheek; but the latter scarcely appeared to perceive it. "Oh! oh!" murmured he, without entirely waking up, "there must be birds in this tree, for I have just felt a feather on my face."

Thor now plainly saw that he must relinquish the idea of destroying this invulnerable giant, so, as soon as there was an opportunity, he and his companions separated from Skymmer, wishing him a good journey.

The latter, however, who had conceived a friendship for them, warned them before quitting them, that they would soon enter the town of Utgard, the capital of the country of the giants, and that they must be careful during their abode there, not to boast too much, because that was a place where the vanity of little men was not tolerated.

The advice which the giant Skymmer gave Thor and his travelling companions, my little friends, is valuable to everybody, and especially to children, for he thereby gave them to understand that pride is of no avail, and that whatever merit we may have, we must be careful not to be vain of it.

#### QUESTIONS FOR EXAMINATION.

What is said of the northern gods' taste for travelling?

Which was the principal travelling divinity? and what was his office?

Describe Thor's travelling equipage.

What remarkable weapons did Thor possess?

Who did Thor choose as his travelling companion?

Where did they stop for the night? and how was their supper provided?

How did Tialfe incur Thor's displeasure?

What atonement did Thor require for Tialfe's fault?

Where did the travellers pass the next night?

What did Thor see when he arose?

What risk did the travellers find they had run?

How was the travelling party increased?

How did Thor lose his supper?

What was the result of Thor's efforts to destroy Skymmer?

What advice did Skymmer give his travelling companions?

---

#### THE GIANTS' TOWN.

The travellers then continued their journey towards the famous town of Utgard, which Skymmer had told them of; and as they soon forgot the giant's wise counsel, you will see what their imprudence brought upon them.

As soon as they could distinguish the giants' town, they perceived that it was surrounded with gratings, and shut up with enormous bars, so that it seemed to them impossible to get into it; but on coming nearer, they found it would be very easy for them, as they were not larger than common men, to squeeze between the gratings, which they soon did.

This town was not like those that we inhabit. The houses were so high that they could not see the tops of them without raising their eyes to heaven; the persons also they met in the streets were all of prodigious height; and the king's palace to which the strangers were conducted, appeared to touch the clouds.

The king who received them into this immense palace was not smaller than his subjects. On perceiving the strangers, he gave them a friendly smile, which had something alarming in it, for he twisted his mouth in

order not to open it too wide, and thus made a frightful grimace. Happily the god Thor and his companions were not timid; and although it was enough to upset them, they put a good face on the matter, and the king entertained them with especial favor. He warned them, however, that no stranger could live in the town of Utgard, unless he surpassed other men in some art or other.

Giant though he was, it seemed to me this king had established a good regulation in his kingdom; for if it were the law in every country that each individual should apply himself to some business in which he should endeavor to surpass his comrades, we should soon see neither sluggards nor idlers, who are nothing but a trouble to their parents.

The king's words very much disconcerted the travellers, who exchanged glances. They now recollected the giant Skymmer's counsel, but it was too late to retreat.

"Let us see," said the king, addressing himself first to the god Loke, "what is your talent?" To confess the truth, Loke, notwithstanding his habitual cunning and mischief, had never practised any useful profession, because he had no taste for toil or application. However, he replied with assurance that his especial art was to eat more than anybody in the world; and that he was ready to maintain a challenge of this sort, against the first who would take it up. On hearing this little person hold such language, the king could scarcely avoid laughing aloud, and immediately calling for one of his courtiers, named Loge (which in the language of the country means Flame), he commanded that he should measure his power against the strangers in the art of gluttony.

An enormous basin filled with meat was immediately brought, and placed in the middle of the hall, and the two

champions began to devour in emulation of one another everything before them. Loke was not less active in swallowing than his adversary, and to see him going on at such a rate, one would have thought he had borrowed for the occasion the terrible jaws of his son the wolf Fenris. But when the two met in the middle of the basin, it was observed that Loke had only eaten the meat, while his competitor had not even left the bones. All the bystanders immediately declared that Loke was conquered, and the latter retired full of shame at having shown himself such a glutton, before everybody, not to mention perhaps a solid indigestion, which his foolish pride might cost him.

“And thou, young man,” said the giant king, next addressing himself to Tialfe, “hast thou not also some talent?”

“Yes, indeed,” replied the latter, not at all disconcerted, “my especial art is to surpass the most skilful skaters.”

On hearing this reply, the king called another of his courtiers, whose name was Hugo (which, in the language of the giants, means Thought), and directed him to join Tialfe in a race; but scarcely had the two started forward in a vast plain covered with very smooth ice, when Hugo left his competitor very far behind him, and the luckless Tialfe, panting and coloring with shame, stopt in the midst of the bursts of laughter of the assembly.

The king then turning towards Thor, asked him in what art he wished to make trial of his skill, he who was celebrated throughout the earth for his strength and courage. The god answered that he was willing to submit to several trials, but that he wished first to contend with some giant, as to who could drink fastest and keep at it longest.



You will agree with me, doubtless, my good friends, that Thor had chosen a singular sort of merit to make a boast of, for there is nothing commendable in a man's being able to fill himself like a tun; but I suppose the god wished to ridicule the giants, by proposing such a challenge to them.

The king immediately had brought to them a long horn which appeared full to the brim of some sort of liquor, telling Thor that the best drinkers of the country emptied it at a single swallow, a great number of them at two, but there was no such poor drinker in all his dominions as could not empty it in three swallows. Thor took no heed of this warning, thinking that the giant wished to intimidate him, and as he was extremely thirsty, he fancied he should easily empty the horn without stopping to take breath; but when he had withdrawn it from his mouth, he was amazed to see that the liquor it contained, had scarcely gone down a few inches.

Thor, then, without confessing himself conquered, restored the horn to the cupbearer, who had brought it, strongly suspecting there was some witchcraft in it, and begging the king to be so kind as to give him an opportunity of retaliation, by showing his strength and skill in some other way. He had taken care to conceal his wonderful girdle under his clothes, and did not doubt but that the spectators would be overwhelmed with astonishment, at seeing how robust he was.

"We have among us," replied the king, "a trifling game, in which we exercise our children, as soon as they begin to walk, and I am quite sure you will find it very easy; it consists simply in lifting up my cat so that none of its paws should touch the ground!"

As he finished speaking, a great flame-colored cat jumped into the middle of the hall, and Thor, pretending to caress him, tried to pass his hand under his stomach, and raise him up from the ground; but in spite of all his efforts he could not succeed in so doing, because the cat, lifting its back, raised but one paw at a time. Thor was now again entirely disconcerted; and the king, to console him, told him with a laugh, that this little sport was beyond the power of men of his size. "If I am small," rejoined Thor angrily (for you are aware that he was not very patient by nature), "I am not therefore less courageous, and I challenge any one, whoever he be in this country, to wrestle with me." You remember, doubtless, that wrestling was an exercise practised among the ancients, in which two champions strove to throw each other down; but the giant, beginning to laugh anew, immediately called his nurse Hela, who was very old, and ordered her to wrestle with Thor. At first the god, supposing that the giant meant to throw contempt upon him, had a great mind to draw back, but then fearing lest they should accuse him of being afraid of this old goodie, he agreed to contend with her, and they began to deal each other rude blows. It even seemed as if the combat would be much prolonged without either appearing disposed to give way, when Thor having slipt, fell on one knee, and the giant put an end to the struggle, declaring that no one in all his court would agree to contend with a champion who had suffered himself to be conquered by an old woman. It was this defeat which most humiliated the god Thor, who was so ashamed that he would have wished to hide himself in the earth. After this, the strangers were conducted by the king into the shining hall of his palace, where a

magnificent banquet awaited them; they there spent the whole night, and very early the next morning, when they announced their intention of continuing their journey, the king accompanied them to the gates of the city, where he thus addressed them:—"As you are extremely proud," said he, "I wished to humble your vanity before others, in order to cure you of it, if indeed it be possible to do so; but now I will explain to you by what means you have been conquered in everything you undertook.

"The person who contended with Loke for the prize of gluttony, was Flame, which devours everything, and whose course nothing can arrest. He who surpassed Tialfe in the race, notwithstanding his agility, was Thought, which is more rapid than the lightning itself.

"As to you," continued he, turning towards Thor, "the extremity of the horn which you vainly tried to empty, reached the sea, and you must have drunk up the whole ocean, before you could have emptied it. My cat, which you could not lift from the ground, is the great serpent of Midgard, which encircles the whole globe with the folds of its tail; and my old nurse Hela, whose victory so shamed you, is none other than death itself, who, sooner or later, overthrows the most intrepid and the most robust of men."

On hearing these words, Thor could not control his rage. He raised his club to strike the giant, but the latter had disappeared along with his town, and the travellers found themselves in the midst of a beautiful field covered with verdure, whence they directed their steps towards Midgard, in order to rest there.

The meaning of this fable is so clear, my good friends, that I need not explain it to you; I would only advise you not to forget it at moments when your self-love is

gratified by a trifling success; you will thus be preserved in the future from mortifications, which a silly vanity never fails to bring on those who give way to it.

#### QUESTIONS FOR EXAMINATION.

Describe the town of Utgard.

How were the travellers received by the king? and what warning did he give them?

In what way did Loke undertake to distinguish himself?

How was his competitor called? and which was victorious?

In what did Tialfe attempt to show his ability?

Who was Tialfe's competitor? and what was the result?

How did Thor attempt to prove his power? and what success did he have?

What was Thor's next attempt? and what was its result?

What disgrace did he incur?

Relate the giant's parting speech to the travellers.

What moral may be drawn from this fable?



#### THE DEATH OF BALDER.

The god Thor did not constitute the whole family of the powerful Odin and the goddess Frigga, my little friends; they had another son called Balder, who was mild and benevolent, and did not in any degree share either the warlike disposition of his brother, or his taste for adventures.

This god was as handsome as he was amiable; he was represented as a fair youth, his head surrounded with rays, and his lips apart, because he was the god both of elo-



quence and peace. His palace was surrounded by the soft and peaceful light of a fine summer's night; and there he lived with his wife Nanna, without joining either the combats or the noisy banquets of the Valhalla.

But lo, and behold! one day Balder had a dream which gave him great uneasiness; for you know these gods, who had all sorts of human weaknesses, could not live without eating and sleeping any more than we can. It seemed to him he was threatened with some great misfortune, and that his life was in danger. Greatly alarmed, he immediately went off to his mother Frigga, and, in a sad tone, related to her the bad dream which tormented him, beseeching her, if possible, to avert the evil with which he was threatened; which ought to have been an easy matter to her, since (as I have told you) she could read the future, and saw clearly whatever was to come to pass. However, she had no power to alter the decrees of Fate.

Frigga was not less alarmed than her son at this gloomy presage, and in order to avert the evil, she arranged some propitious Runes, and directed her messenger Gna (who was the Iris of this other Juno) to take from her stable a marvellous horse, who could traverse air and water, and go into every part of the world, to implore everything in existence not to injure her dear Balder.

Speaking of this wonderful horse, on which Frigga sent her messenger to travel through the air, I must tell you that the Scandinavians believed that their goddesses, in the absence of other equipages, could travel through the air riding on a stick. This is the reason that, in the Fairy Tales, we often see enchanters and magicians transported in this manner from one end of the world to the other.

Meanwhile, Gna quickly executed her commission, and

Frigga received the oath of fire, water, iron, and the other metals ; trees, stones, earth, birds, animals, fish, serpents, and even diseases, who all promised never in any way to injure Balder. The latter then believed himself so secure against danger of every sort, that when the gods met in the palace of Odin, to indulge in their favorite sports, they vied with each other as to who should aim the greatest number of arrows and stones at the young god, or who should give him the sharpest thrusts with the sword, because every one knew that he could not receive any injury from them. The wicked Loke, however, who was aware of Frigga's fears and precautions, strongly suspected that the messenger had neglected some precaution, which had, perhaps, appeared unimportant to her, and taking the figure of an old woman, pretended to congratulate the goddess on having nothing further to apprehend for her beloved son. She gladly received his congratulations, but added : " Weapons of all sorts, disease itself, have all promised me faithfully not to attack my son, and I may be, with regard to them, perfectly easy ; but I should be still more so if my messenger had not forgotten to secure the same promise from a little plant, which appeared to her so insignificant, that indeed it is scarcely worth considering."

This was enough for the cunning Loke. He went off quite satisfied, and soon discovered that this insignificant plant which Frigga had despised was none other than the mistletoe—a little plant which grows on large trees, and particularly on oaks. He then hastened to gather a branch of it, and having pared it to a sharp point, returned to join the sports of the other gods.

Now, there was among them a god called Hoder, who

presided, it was said, over chance, but who kept aloof, because he had the misfortune to be blind, and because, also, his presence was generally considered a bad omen.

This was just the very individual whom Loke approached, asking him why he did not join the games of which Balder was the hero as well as the butt. "Alas!" replied Hoder to him, "don't you know that I am blind, and that I cannot aim any blow at Balder, because I cannot see where he is?" "Take this rod," said Loke, presenting him the branch of mistletoe; "I will guide your hand, and if you reach Balder, it will be much to your honor."

The traitor had scarcely uttered these words, when Hoder, aiming a blow, reached poor Balder without being aware of having done so, and killed him on the spot.

Thus, my children, the young god's dream was realized, notwithstanding all that his mother Frigga had been able to accomplish to avert the fatal hour, and all the family of the gods were plunged into grief and consternation. Loke was the only one who rejoiced at it, because he was the most wicked of all; but as the gods soon learnt his infamous treason, he was forced to take refuge under the form of a salmon in a large river, where they soon discovered him, notwithstanding all his efforts to escape them. It was Thor who, having seized him by the tail, obliged him to resume his natural figure; then dragging him, with the help of the other gods, into a deep cavern, he loaded him with indestructible chains, and placed above his head a serpent whose venom fell, drop by drop, on his face. However, they allowed a goddess, called Signia, whom he had taken as his wife after marrying the giantess Angerbode, to receive the venom in a silver vase, which she emptied

as soon as it was filled. During the absence of this goddess, Loke suffered such frightful agony that he uttered lamentable cries, and shook his chains so furiously that the Scandinavians attributed earthquakes to him. After executing this just vengeance, the gods busied themselves about the funeral obsequies of the unfortunate Balder, whose wife Nanna had also died of grief, and they determined that his body should be burned in a vessel which the god had used in his voyages ; but, when they wished to set the vessel afloat, they could not manage it without the help of a powerful sorceress, who came to their aid from the giants' country, riding on a monstrous wolf, which she guided with serpents instead of a bridle. Balder's and Nanna's bodies were laid in the dismal vessel in presence of all the gods and a great number of giants. When the flame began to rise, Thor threw into it a little dwarf, who had been in the habit of running before Balder, as well as the horse which he had used in his rides, and Odin placed on the pile a large gold ring as a farewell token.

I have described this funeral ceremony with some minuteness, my children, because it was with similar rites that those of the kings and war-chiefs were usually celebrated among the northern nations, when the wife, the slave, and the horse belonging to the dead man, were most generally consumed with him.

#### QUESTIONS FOR EXAMINATION.

Who was Balder? and what was his character?

How was this god represented?

Where was his palace? and who was his wife?

What alarmed Balder?

What steps did Frigga take to avert the threatened evil?



What fabulous personage does Gna answer to?

In what fashion did the Scandinavian goddesses travel through the air?

What success did Gna meet with?

What was the consequence of Balder's being considered invulnerable?

How did Loke discover that Balder might be injured?

What little plant had been forgotten?

Who was Hoder?

What evil did he occasion by Loke's means?

How was Loke's treason punished?

By whom, and in what way was Loke's punishment ameliorated?

To what did the Scandinavians attribute earthquakes?

What became of Nanna?

How was the funereal ship set afloat?

Describe Balder's funeral obsequies?

What is remarked regarding these ceremonies?

---

#### THE HELL OF THE SCANDINAVIANS.

But no sooner was this sad duty accomplished, my little friends, than Frigga commanded a high reward to be offered, by sound of trumpet, to whoever would go down into hell to supplicate the cruel Hela to allow Balder to return to dwell among the gods.

Hermode, surnamed "the fleet," who was also a son of Odin, undertook this dangerous commission; for you remember no one was allowed to leave the dominions of the dead after having once entered them. His father lent him his excellent horse Sleipner, that he might the more quickly accomplish his journey and bring back the reply that every one was impatient for.

Sleipner, with his eight feet, was certainly the most rapid of all coursers, and Hermode the fleet, the best of all horsemen ; but it was so far, so very far from heaven to hell that the traveller had to journey nine days and nights, through deep and dark valleys, before he reached the first river of Hela's empire. Having arrived at the brink of this river, which was wide and deep, Hermode was at a loss how to cross over to the other shore, when he perceived at a short distance a bridge, covered with a magnificent golden roof, and guarded by a female warrior, completely armed from head to foot. This amazon objected very much at first to allowing Hermode to enter this empire, into which only the dead were admitted ; but she permitted him to continue his journey on his assuring her that he came direct from heaven, in order to intercede with Hela for Balder, in the name of Frigga and Odin.

Hermode having pursued his course, soon arrived at Niflheim, the abode of the base and the peaceful after their death, for, as I have told you, only the brave were admitted into the Valhalla ; and he was terrified at the spectacle offered by these sad abodes.

In the midst of this hell was a spring, from whence flowed those poisonous rivers which had formerly produced the powerful Ymir, and the race of the giants of the Frost. These rivers were distinguished from each other by different ominous names, such as Agony, the Enemy of Joy, Perdition, Whirlwind, Roaring, and Tempest ; the last of these rivers, which was also called the Noisy, on account of the fearful sound produced by its waves as they rushed on, encircled the gratings of the palace of the dead.

Hermode, not to be daunted, however, made his horse clear at a single leap the barrier which still separated him

from the hideous Hela, whom he easily recognised by her particolored body, half blue, half flesh-colored; at her feet was a dingy-looking cock, who from time to time uttered a dismal cry; and her retinue was composed of the gloomy divinities formerly given her by Odin as companions.

A little way off, Hermode recognised his brother, quietly seated in the palace of the dead, beside his wife Nanna, whereupon the god complimented Hela in his best style, in order to persuade her to allow Balder to return with him to heaven, where his absence had plunged the family of the gods and the whole universe in grief; and indeed this could not but be so, since Balder personified the sun, whose absence covers all nature with deep gloom.

At first, the pitiless Hela appeared not to heed either the compliments or the complaints of Hermode, so accustomed was she to listening to such words every day; but at length, suddenly allowing herself to be touched by his prayers, she replied, that since, as he said, all the universe was so afflicted at Balder's death, she would permit this god's return to Midgard, provided there could not be found throughout the whole world a single thing, animate or inanimate, which did not shed tears at his loss.

Hermode, finding this was the only reply he could obtain from this inexorable divinity, remounted his steed and returned to the gods, carrying a gold ring from Balder to Odin, and a gold thimble sent by Nanna to the goddess Frigga, as a testimonial of remembrance and friendship.

On the way, he perceived that he crossed nine worlds, which constituted so many dependencies on Hela's kingdom; and he could not help shuddering on passing near a hell still more terrible than that of Niflheim, but which, as

it seemed to him, no one yet inhabited. The gate of this awful place, which was called Nastrond, was formed of serpents' heads, all ready to vomit torrents of venom on the perjurers and assassins, who, when the world came to an end, were to be imprisoned in this fearful place; a monstrous wolf also awaited them, howling frightfully.

As soon as Hela's reply was known among the gods, they all set out to beseech everything in existence to weep for Balder's death, since this was the only means by which this amiable young man could be recalled to life. Men, beasts, trees, metals, the rocks themselves, all joined in this general mourning, and when all things were thus weeping in concert, it was really like an universal deluge.

The gods now began to feel assured that Balder would soon be restored to them, so abundantly did the tears of the whole world flow, when one of them discovered, at the extremity of a dark cavern, an old sorceress, whom no one had yet thought of. Indeed I suspect that this sorceress was no other than the god Loke, who had assumed this figure in his prison, in order to deceive the gods; for when they besought her to join in the general mourning, she sharply replied, that she could not weep, because she wished Balder to remain in hell. Nothing could soften this wicked heart, and the cruel Hela kept her prey.

If, in pursuing your geographical studies, my little friends, you have been taught that in northern climates the sun always remains a part of the year concealed under the horizon, you will easily understand the fable of Balder's descent into hell. The universal mourning typifies the season of winter, which is so long and gloomy in those countries, and where a thaw always precedes the return of light and heat.



I beg you to observe here, that this is not the first time we have seen the descent of the gods to the palace of the dead mentioned in the mythological fables. Among the Egyptians Osiris, among the Greeks Hercules, both, like Balder, visited this sad abode, whence they both returned, radiantly triumphant. We shall soon see that the Scandinavian god was not less fortunate than the gods of other countries, which will plainly show that the same ideas give rise to the same fancies among all the different nations of the earth. Thus you see that none of these fables is without its hidden meaning, with which well taught children ought to be acquainted, that so they may avoid those errors which should be confined to the ignorant and idle.

#### QUESTIONS FOR EXAMINATION.

- What steps did Frigga take to recover Balder?
- Who undertook the perilous commission?
- Describe Hermode's journey to hell.
- Describe the Niflheim.
- How was Hela surrounded?
- Who did Hermode see in the palace of the dead?
- Why did Balder's death plunge the universe in grief?
- On what conditions did Hela promise to release Balder?
- What presents did Balder and Nanna send to Odin and Frigga?
- Describe the Nastrond.
- How were Hela's conditions fulfilled?
- What is related of the old sorceress?
- What is signified by Balder's descent into hell?
- Mention the parallels to this fable in the Grecian and Egyptian mythologies.

## THE TWILIGHT OF THE GODS.

I shall add but one more fable, my little friends, to those I have already related to you, because I know only one more which will interest you. This will acquaint you with the anticipated destiny of the gods of the North, who were so savage and terrible in their sports and their combats, according, at least, to what the Scandinavians were taught by the poets of their country.

These barbarous poets were called Scalds, and they spent their time in reciting, in towns, camps, and even the palaces of the kings, whose glory and perils they shared in war, in the chase, and in their long journeys, the adventures of the gods, and the praises of those heroes who had fallen in the field of battle. These Scalds very much resembled the rhapsodists, who, as you doubtless remember, formerly travelled over Greece, singing the poems of Homer; or perhaps they were still more like the Minstrels and Troubadours, who, at a much more recent period, traversed Europe, going from town to town and from castle to castle, reciting the exploits of warriors, and singing the artless songs they had learnt in their travels. Now, this is what the Scalds sang regarding the destiny of Odin's family, which was not to be eternal, all-powerful as it was in heaven. A day will come, said these poets, and that day will be called "The Twilight of the Gods," when men will have grown so wicked that the whole world will be full of war and discord; then the eternal Being, who reigned before the giant Ymir had been produced by the ice of hell, will resolve to destroy mankind, the universe, and everything in existence. First, there will be an inter-

minable winter, the tempests will rage without ceasing, the chains which bind the wolf Fenris will be broken, and this monster will rush forth from the gloomy cavern where the gods have chained him, and devour the sun. His size will be so great, that his open mouth will touch both heaven and earth. Another monster will carry off the moon; and the great serpent of Midgard, escaping from the sea, whose waves will leave their bed, will vomit over the whole world torrents of venom, which will infect both air and water.

At the same time, Surtur the Black will come forth from hell, armed with a flaming sword. He will embark with the evil Genii in an immense vessel, called the Nag-larfe, built entirely of the nails of dead men, at the sight of which gods and men will tremble. He will become chief of the giants of the Frost, and will march with them to the bridge of heaven, which will crumble under their tread; the ash Ygdrasil will be shaken by the serpent which gnaws its root; the funeral cock of the palace of the dead will redouble his cries, and the heaven of Odin will be rent asunder.

Suddenly, the shrill notes of the god Heimdall's trumpet will resound, and the gods, led on by Odin, will rush forward, followed by the heroes, to combat the giants. The two armies will meet in an immense plain, where a succession of fearful battles will take place, in which Thor and the other gods will be vanquished. The powerful Odin himself will be devoured by the wolf Fenris, who will perish immediately after this victory, as well as Loke, the great serpent, and the frightful Hela.

Balder will then leave the abode of the dead, brighter and more glittering than ever. His rays will illuminate a new and brilliant world, where all the just and worthy

of mankind will be collected ; while the wicked will fall into the Nastrond, where they will be eternally devoured by the monstrous wolf who there awaits them.

Do you not think, my dear children, that this fable of the end of the world must have appeared even more grotesque than alarming to the Scandinavians, and that the Scalds were very bold to utter such extravagances to their auditors ? Still, we must not consider everything in these narrations of the poets ridiculous, since we find in them a future reward promised to the good, and eternal punishment to the wicked. Besides, this belief was also common among the Persians, according to whom Ormuzd and Ahriman were, at the end of time, to engage in a final battle, which would renew the world and establish the reign of the brilliant Mithras.

But what should surprise us most in these narrations, in which we also find a description of some of the grandest catastrophes of the world, is to discover among those barbarous nations, long before they had embraced Christianity, the consoling idea, now common to all the nations of the earth, of a future life, when every one will be judged according to his merits.

Let us strive then, my little friends, scrupulously to perform all the duties appointed us by Providence, according to the position assigned to each one of us upon earth. That of your parents and teachers is to give you good examples and useful lessons ; but it is yours, my dear children, to show docility and gentleness towards those who love and instruct you ; and above all, never forget that it is those who, while children, conduct themselves with most propriety, who afterwards become the wisest and most virtuous members of society.



## QUESTIONS FOR EXAMINATION.

- Who were the Scalds?  
Whom did they resemble?  
What is meant by the Twilight of the Gods?  
What will be achieved by the wolf Fenris?  
What disasters will be occasioned by the serpent of Midgard and another monster?  
What part will Surtur the Black perform?  
What events will immediately follow?  
What will become of Odin?  
Who will perish immediately after this victory?  
In what guise will Balder then appear? and how will mankind be disposed of?  
In what light ought we to view these tales?  
What nations shared this belief with the Scandinavians?  
What is most surprising in these tales, and how ought we to profit by them?

THE END.









Deacidified using the Bookkeeper process.  
Neutralizing agent: Magnesium Oxide  
Treatment Date: Dec. 2004

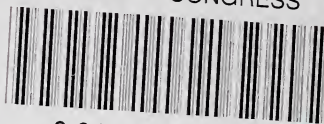
**PreservationTechnologies**

A WORLD LEADER IN PAPER PRESERVATION

111 Thomson Park Drive  
Cranberry Township, PA 16066  
(724) 779-2111

BL310

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 013 654 671 5